
Keep Your Card in This Pocket

Books will be issued only on presentation of proper library cards.

Unless labeled otherwise, books may be retained for two weeks. Borrowers finding books marked, defaced or mutilated are expected to report same at library desk; otherwise the last borrower will be held responsible for all imperfections discovered.

The card holder is responsible for all books drawn on this card.

Penalty for over-due books 2c a day plus cost of notices.

Lost cards and change of residence must be reported promptly.



Public Library

Kansas City, Mo.

TENSION ENVELOPE CORP

DATE DUE

OCT 8 '50

2850

SEP 9 '60

113 7 53

187 29 '65

'OCT 31 '66

Jan 18:30

1. 1. 1. 1.

BAHAMAS: ISLES OF JUNE



Hanns Tschira

The wharf at Nassau is one of the most interesting and lively parts of the city. Sponges, conch shells, great green turtles, corals and other marine curiosities are all landed here.

BAHAMAS:
ISLES OF JUNE

By
Major H. Mac Lachlan Bell

WITH A FOREWORD BY HIS EXCELLENCY
THE GOVERNOR OF THE BAHAMAS,
SIR BEDE CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.V.O.

ROBERT M. McBRIDE & COMPANY

NEW YORK, 1934

BAHAMAS: ISLES OF JUNE
COPYRIGHT, 1934
BY H. MACLACHLAN BELL
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA
FIRST PUBLISHED, APRIL, 1934
SECOND PRINTING, MAY, 1934

To
the immortal memory
of
Lieut. Colonel Andrew Deveau
and the officers, non-commissioned officers
and men of the Loyal South Carolina Militia
and those intrepid Bahamians who fought
the battle of Fort Montagu, April 18, 1783.

"A deed that won the Empire."

The author gratefully acknowledges to the President of the Legislative Council of the Bahamas, Sir George Johnson, Kt., and to Miss Mabel Cole, Secretary of the Bahamas Development Board, and to Miss Sylvia Johnson of the Publicity Department of the Board, his indebtedness for their cooperation in research, their constant interest in the growth of this narrative and their assistance throughout its preparation.

Nassau,
January, 1934.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD.	xiii
1. SAN SALVADOR.	17
2. THE TREASURE ISLANDS.	37
3. THE VIKING STRAIN.	59
4. CHILDREN OF THE FOREST.	78
5. ELEUTHERIANS ALL—HARBOUR ISLAND AND SPANISH WELLS.	103
6. MEN OF THE NORTH—ABACO—GRAND BAHAMA—THE BERRY ISLANDS.	122
7. MYSTERY AND BEAUTY—ANDROS AND EXUMA CAYS.	141
8. CAVALIER AND PURITAN.	164
9. THE LAST PHASE!	183
10. IN MODERN TIMES.	203
APPENDIX.	222

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE WHARF AT NASSAU IS ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING AND LIVELY PARTS OF THE CITY.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
THREE THOUSAND ISLANDS AND ISLETS COM- POSE THE BAHAMAS.	38
THE CITY OF NASSAU IS SET UPON A CORAL STRAND.	62
A SCENE IN THE SPONGE-CLIPPING SHED WHERE THE SPONGES ARE PREPARED FOR EXPORT.	82
BAY STREET IS THE PRINCIPAL BUSINESS THOR- OUGHFARE IN NASSAU.	126
THIS PLAQUE COMMEMORATES CHARLES I'S GRANT MADE OVER THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.	126
THIS SOLDIER OF THE BRITISH WEST INDIES REGIMENT WON THE D.C.M.	146

A TYPICAL NATIVE OF THE BAHAMAS.	146
THE SEA GARDENS OF THE BAHAMAS OFFER A GORGEOUS DISPLAY OF EXOTIC SEA PLANTS AND BRIGHT-HUED TROPICAL FISH.	170
THE NATIVE MARKET.	206
GREGORY ARCH, LEADING OUT OF THE CITY.	206

FOREWORD

IN THIS book Major Bell has approached the romantic and piratical history of the West Indies in general and of the Bahamas in particular from a new angle. In these civilized days piracy is rightly regarded with abhorrence; also, quite apart from this moral consideration, great maritime peoples like the British are deeply interested in the maintenance of law and order on the high seas.

Efforts of states to suppress piracy are recorded frequently in the pages of history. The Carthaginian and Roman Empires took strong measures against the buccaneers who infested Mediterranean waters centuries before the Christian era. In recent times Great Britain's navy has taken a leading part in the suppression of the most diabolical of all forms of piracy—the Arab slave trade. In the Bahamas the outstanding historical example was the act of Woodes Rogers, the first of the regular line of governors appointed by the sovereign. He celebrated his arrival in the Colony in 1718 by hanging nine pirates from the ramparts of Fort Nassau.

When studying the history of piracy it is important not to confuse the common buccaneer, who pillaged indiscriminately the ships of all nations including his own, with privateers like Drake whose depredations were directed against foreign countries which were dangerous rivals of his own land, even when they were not actual enemies. Privateering expeditions, notably those of Drake and Raleigh, often acquired an exploratory character and although such men seldom attempted to bring the cities they sacked under the English crown their activities paved the way to subsequent annexation. The methods of some of these leaders, however, were hardly more civilized than were those of the international sea gangsters. When Henry Morgan sacked Panama and other cities the most revolting barbarities were perpetrated. These deeds are partially excused by the fact that he recruited his men from all classes and all nationalities. That he was, however, regarded as a superior type of freebooter seems evident from the fact that he was knighted by his sovereign and ultimately became a colonial governor—not that that exalted rank necessarily confers on its recipient the hallmark of respectability.

It is evident that privateers like Drake, Raleigh and Morgan, who on the one hand enjoyed the confidence of their sovereigns and on the other hand used methods that were seldom very creditable, were fairly representative of a whole class of adventurers

who played a great part in the establishment of our Empire. Even in modern times ruthless patriots like Rhodes and filibusterers like Jamieson, rather than peaceful explorers of Dr. Livingstone's type, have been the men who have extended and consolidated Great Britain's African possessions.

Major Bell has endeavored in his admirable book to restore to the privateers the distinction which they enjoyed among their contemporaries and to persuade law-abiding readers that although we may not be able to condone the privateers' morals, we have every reason to admire their courage and be proud of their achievements. These men represent the virility of our race, so if we refrain from analysing their motives too closely we should find no difficulty, even in these days of unctuous rectitude, in praising exploits which were not less gallant because they were barbarously executed. I am personally grateful to Major Bell because one of my own ancestors, George Clifford third earl of Cumberland, sacked San Juan in circumstances which differed widely from the accepted practices of modern warfare. Moreover Walter Raleigh and George Clifford, besides being intrepid warriors, were also accomplished courtiers, and to this extent (and it is a considerable extent) they were an improvement on today's conscientious objector, of whom it has been said that although he failed to earn distinction in the Great War, he was very successful in the boudoir.

I am sure all readers of Major Bell's book, particularly Bahamians, will find pleasure and diversion in perusing the interesting narrative he has given us in "Bahamas: Isles of June."

B. E. H. CLIFFORD

Government House, Nassau
February 14th 1934.

Chapter One

SAN SALVADOR

*"... island of the wave
Faith's ancient fort and armory."
(adapted)*

THERE was a wooden cross roughened by weathering, bleached by tropic suns. A wind swayed the bushes disclosing nondescript ruins that made an unofficial cairn. Over beyond lay Riding Rock Bay where once the Discovery ships had moored. The dawn spread over all a canopy glowing with gold and crimson. The spot on which I stood was sanctuary—was that on which an intrepid group of explorers and adventurers, Christopher Columbus, Guterriez, Salcedo, Escovedo, Sanchez and the brothers Pinzon, had heard the first mass known to the western world.

The island of San Salvador would soon be bathed in morning sunshine, the bells of the Hostel Chapel would ring for matins. Where the *Santa Maria*, the *Niña* and the *Pinta* had swung at anchor on the morning of October 12, 1492, there now floated merely two peaceful sponging vessels.

Smoke was curling up from the hearth and oven

fires of Cockburn Town. Over the inland lakes the ducks were stirring in spattering flights. Away on the eastern side, reflecting the rising sun, there stood a monument erected by the *Chicago Herald* to mark the "Landfall"—a term non-seagoing folk find difficult; it means the first sight of land from sea.

The sisal fields were heavy with dew and the glistening moisture made a sweet incense rise from the hibiscus, the bougainvillæa bushes, and the wild Rambler roses that clustered about the ruins of ancient homes. A deserted spot this which had served its appointed part in doubling or perchance quadrupling the empire of the white man. Just a few signs of life. Instead of the vanished race of the Lucayans, there trod along a narrow path, Indian file, a family of negroes who carried on their heads the firewood and the implements needed for their field and forest labour in the clustering bush about Kerr Mountain and Granny Lake. A low surf was breaking far out by Sugar Loaf Rocks and the lazy swing of the waters seemed to match the heartsease and content of the morning. If man has done little for this place of momentous happening, nature has done much.

A mind stirred by these scenes brought to the mental vision a kaleidoscope of the past. Flashes from ancient chronicles that had been pored over in musty schoolrooms far away on other shores: the tempest-ridden isles of Colonsay, Oig and Mull off Argyll-

shire, where Spaniards of a day later than Columbus' were to land and be forever exiles from their sunny homeland. And were to enrich my ancestors through teaching needlecraft and the art of wool weaving. The fine carvings on pulpits, the scrollwork on the hilts of the claymores, the minute inscriptions on the dagger blades these Scots carried in their stockings were legacies. The armadas of Spain as physical entities were wrecked—but the lands and the rocky islands off which they came to grief received from these shipwrecked folk a cultural inheritance that is distinguishable to this day.

Different are the scenes on Scottish shores from those on the "Isles of June" where they lie bathed in their seas of turquoise, ultramarine and green. In the place of wet cold and piercing winds, one feels the balm and peace of the near-tropics. The oilskin headgear, the pilot-cloth coat were replaced here with a light helmet, a shirt and shorts. Columbus could have picked no stage setting more ideal than this for that romantic hour on the twelfth of October when the flags of Spain advanced from the beach while a priest intoned, and Columbus, with jewelled sword-hilt held at eye-level, made responses and gave tongue before the wondering ears of an alien race to his expression of gratitude for his epochal landing.

Some amid the rude crews of sailors who had threatened rebellion during the long voyage, and

had dourly acceded to the three days of grace their leader had pleaded for on the deck of the *Santa Maria* on the eighth, were now deeply contrite; their obeisances would be full of the ache of penitence and the desire for pardon; and mayhap it was just such a morning as this—a benison of air and scene.

The honk of a Ford sounding persistently cut short these reveries, led me to rejoin Father Dennis Parnell of the Benedictines, who has charge of the hostel and chapel that the Knights of Columbus maintain at Cockburn Town. Bronzed, athletic, indefatigable, an old Rugby player, Father Parnell is nowadays a combination of agricultural director, auto mechanic and spiritual leader. A man of many talents who brings to these wind-blown isles an accent sometimes reminiscent of old Quebec.

Settling ourselves in the Ford we bowled over coral roadways to pull up at the hostel—though not before a swim had refreshed us. And to what a breakfast—boiled fish, hominy, limes and pepper sauce, with loads of marmalade. We shared a tin of Waverly mixture and yarned, and now and again in came a parishioner—advice about crops, to borrow a hoe, to report the plight of a sick neighbour. How comfortable, cool and airy the room was—not the least of its attractions being panelling of rich dark wood, men's chairs to sit in, and Father Dennis a perfect host.

The father produced rare old treasures: a bit of

crusted bronze, pistol-shaped, in a coral setting; a few coins; maps of this group of islands prepared by somebody who called them "The Treasure Islands." We made notes of locations of folk interest and later when the Government School Inspector dropped in further notations were jotted down on the maps. Delving down into his vast store of sea lore the native-born Inspector added picturesque tales gathered in a lifetime spent in a round of visitations to islands that are literally numbered by the hundreds.

Inevitably we three revived the dispute over the discovery of America. Will it ever die? I stated the case for the Vikings, asserting they came first via Iceland, Greenland and Labrador, citing their markings on old rocks in that very far north where now the airplane patrols the Canadian wilds. I recounted Indian tales or legends that seem to bring to life Leif Ericsson and his band of blond warriors, who marched steel-helmed and steel-armed into battle. The tribal laws and customs of the Six Nations clearly were based on early Norse practices; these furnished the foundation for the great Confederacy of the Iroquois and its system of government. Yes, I said, the Northmen were first. There surely could be no other explanation.

We were amiably partisan: my padre for his faithful who followed a gleam; the old schoolmaster, as a stout Bahamian, for his country's right to fame.

We took up history in great cycles. The spacious

days of Isabella and Elizabeth; of buccaneering, privateering and wrecking. The rise of the Nordics in their Lutheranism under the shadow of Calvin; the recession of the Latins from sheer exhaustion that followed wars with the Moors and between rival Crowns.

"And," says Father Dennis, the devout Catholic, "we go on and our task will never be finished." All this, of course, led us back again to the dispute within the circle of discovery, as to what island really was "Discovery Island"; the backers of San Salvador stoutly quoting Columbus in his description of his Guanahani—"small and level, with a large lagoon." Samaná, Mayaguana and Turks Island have their advocates. Cat Island was fixed on by Irving and Humboldt as the place of landing, but, in 1856, a captain in the British Navy, one Beacher, set down dogmatically and with John Bull positiveness his decision by chart and needle that it was San Salvador.

Columbus spoke of the islands as Lucayos. "Why?" I demanded, now in full march along a path in history that school had lighted only dimly for the hot, fevered exploring of a boy's mind.

"An Indian derivative," said the schoolman, "Yucaya."

"But," interrupted the padre, "could it not be quite likely a corruption of the Spanish words *Los Cayos*, meaning *The Cays*?"

That stumped us! Cays, by the way, are islets, if

you understand what I mean. Thousands of little jewels straying for hundreds of miles across these seas—each with its decorations of coconut palms and its silver edging of white beach of coral sand. You pronounce Cays as “keys” so it does not seem unnatural to hear the native Bahamians—the “Conch”—speak of “de keys,” or “dat key,” or “dem keys.”

Presently His Majesty's School Inspector left us in favour of a term examination at the schoolhouse; I followed on an easy-paced tour of the village. It was clean and tidy. One yard alone was busy—with an open-air market for goat meat and turtle. A husky mammy coiffured with a highly-coloured handkerchief acted as butcher's sales clerk. A darker-hued African, evidently the head of the house, slumped dozingly under the fronds of a friendly palm. He was the fisher and killer—had brought home the bacon, in a manner of speaking. He had done the slaughtering and the cleaning, so now his spouse had taken charge as barterer. Sometimes she obtained shillings, sometimes the best she could do was to trade for eggs, corn, or “red meal,” or fruit. Often she had to resell the results of these first exchanges. Here trading was more than half barter and exchange, the cash transactions being backed by a limited currency supply which reposed in a greasy old Royal Bank of Canada cash bag that hung between the layers and superstructure of neck and bosom. She proffered me her wares one and all. I

rejected all overtures, yet was politely thanked. A sudden sharp command produced a commotion in a brood of sugar-cane-chewing pickaninnies and one of these dived into the neatly whitewashed hut. Out he came with a cunningly cut walking-stick. "Sha'ks spine, suh—nice fo' walkin'—four shillin', suh."

It was "thisaways," as the islanders say, that I was able to send to an old friend, whose cane I had once lost on a week-end in Ontario, something exotic to replace it. Something that looked different, an *amende honorable*, a shark's spine walking-stick; in short, something I did not desire yet was too weak to refuse to purchase. "Thank you, suh, come again, suh," and mammy bobbed a toothsome curtsy.

I peeked into the cottage. It had a board floor, two beds with snowy white sheets made of some material labelled faintly "Canada Flour." There was a mirror, a table with enamelled plates upon it, a picture of Queen Victoria giving a Bible to a representative of some presumably heathen people; a few empty bottles on a shelf, and with them cups and saucers. The family provender hung at the back door—dry or drying fish and conch meat. The oven was cold but there was bread on another shelf behind a bit of highly-coloured curtain. The windows had curtains of a flowered fabric much affected in an alien northern place called Greenwich Village and there known as "cottage cretonne." A touch of art appeared modestly on a vessel of domestic utility

of a variety that the Germans used to ship all over the world. Around it a festoon of painted pansies ran in a gay sort of way. On the wall was a text stating "Jesus loves us." So were domesticity and piety commingled.

In and out of this residence wandered a goat that paid little heed to humans. Chased away when he was about to snatch a tasty titbit from the "boss man's" spare pants laid out for washing in the yard, he scrambled nimbly over a wall, scattering noisy chickens and himself bleating in protest. Neighbours smiled genially. I seemed to be associated with these "on-goings," so I started to leave amid many calls of "Good-bye, suh" and through an aura of goat, which is a strong thing, comprising the essence of all evil smells. Sometimes I think there was a reason why the devil planted goats in these lovely islands—were they not needed to counteract the perfumed jasmine?

School scenes in Cockburn Town were animated and cheerful. Teachers and pupils are descendants of the Africans released here after 1837. A docile, cheerful lot. The little boys in faded blue shorts and shirts had shining faces; the little girls were mostly in white dresses, eager brown eyes snapping with alertness as the Inspector questioned them.

Older pupils acted as monitors. The singing of "God Save the King" showed that the traditions of the British had been implanted early. The building I found to be the usual school one, somewhere about

fifty feet long, the windows open, yet possessed of storm shutters. A few maps and pictures, some old-fashioned forms, the ubiquitous blackboard and then something unusual—a few switches handy on every teacher's desk.

The inspector followed the Socratic form of question and answer. As a visitor one had to be presented, and greeted with handclapping, the inevitable "few words" had to be said. Whereupon one could readily see that the small brown folk decided it was time to rest. Little bodies relaxed and in a few minutes, given a good prosy dealer in bromides, the air would have been quite decidedly slumberous. But this speaker was crazy. He dealt in such strange exertions as physical training and drill. He raised mild interest and a chuckle by demonstrations and even showed himself human by teaching a game. Then he suddenly lost caste with his audience. He commenced to talk of "growing things." This implied using machetes, wielding hoes and portaging dirt to make a garden. A polite and stony silence marked his close. They rightly disapproved of such a stranger. Their eyes seemed to say—"Boss man, if dat's your best today, please, boss man, let's get on wid de examinations—dey ain't wuss dan you is."

It is a far cry from the monastery of La Rabida, where the ninety who sailed with Columbus received absolution before the departure from Spain to San Salvador; history has recognized that fact by allot-

ting to these men an honoured place among the brave who carried the faith to far lands. Yet is it not probable that they were just the usual run of men who set out on such desperate adventures? A visionary commanding, a few great hearts as executive officers, the others stout fellows of that sort who for a golden guinea or a louis d'or followed "their mercenary calling and were gone."

On the island there are no traceable evidences of their occupation—not even a shrine save where the weather-beaten cross is set to mark the spot of the first mass. Of the people they found there, the Lucayans, no shred remains. Farther to the south, on Turks Island, you can see a Mongol cast of face and a lighter-skinned people. Probably the blood of the conquerors and the conquered mingled.

The Roman Catholic Church, acting through the Benedictine Fathers and the Knights of Columbus, has given to the island the appearance of a shrine. The mission house is solidly built, half hostel, half chapel. Into the walls are let commemorative plaques; the chapel is a private place set aside for meditation amid reminders of the glory of an achievement that coupled the story of the Cross with the valour and courage of the Crusaders. Upstairs is the resthouse with accommodation for about ten.

Here the inland lakes resemble the Muskoka region in Northern Ontario: Little Lake, Blue Lake, Storr's Lake, Stout's Lake and Great Lake—they are sepa-

rated by slightly rolling country. Here and there are interior settlements of limestone houses each surrounded by walls or dykes and lording it over neatly cultivated areas of corn, melon, cassava and peas. The lakes are shallow and across many of them men and women walk on artificially created paths built up of stones and debris.

The scene is more picturesque than one expects in low-lying islands. The British Board of Trade has a modern lighthouse on Dixon Hill which is overland about five miles from the spot marked as that of the "landfall." In celebration of the four hundredth anniversary of the Discovery the *Chicago Herald* erected a monument on this site—a commission having visited the island and verified the location. This monument is of native limestone and bears a marble plaque, into which the following inscription has been carved:

On this spot
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

First set foot on the soil of
The New World.

Erected by the
Chicago Herald
June 15, 1891.

This island, by the way, was known for a time as Watlings Island, some say out of compliment to

a pious murderer, Captain George Watlings, who, though his ways were immoral and his practices most lewd, kept rigid observance of the Sabbath and used to "rope's end" any member of his crew who threw dice on Sundays. It is legend that he frequented San Salvador when he rested from his patrol of the galleons' highway—the sea-road over which passed the homeward-bound confiscations and acquisitions of the gold-hungry Spaniards.

The Bahamas Government has of recent years by Act of the Legislature abolished "Watlings" as a name and restored the more romantic "San Salvador" to maps and charts. The island is situated in latitude $24^{\circ} 6'$ N. and longitude $14^{\circ} 26'$ W.; it is nearly twelve miles long from north to south and is from five to seven miles broad. Columbus left a note saying that the "inland lake would hold as a fleet as many ships as there are in Christendom." To have made it accessible to ships of his time a canal would need to have been cut through the section known as the North-west Arm.

On the shores of the lake *lignum-vitæ* and logwood used to be plentiful. In the days of privateering and later when the war between England and France was in progress much cutting took place, and today these valuable growths are practically nil. Some seven hundred people live on the island, subsisting principally by agriculture and fishing.

Columbus took to himself the title of "Admiral

of the Ocean Seas and Governor General of the Islands." On landing, so we are credibly informed, he wore a scarlet cloak and dazzling armour. There was a colourful parade of banners and his standard-bearers included such worthies as Rodrigo de Escovedo and Rodrigo Sanchez and the brothers Pinzon who captained respectively the *Niña* and *Pinta*. We learn that five standards fluttered overhead as the proclamation was read. The beginning of "civilization" for the Americas: yet such was the manner of it, that of the people whom the Spaniards found on "Guanahani"—"a very poor people in everything," it is averred by Columbus—no trace remains. There are no Lucayans and one must therefore conclude that the civilizing processes of the conquerors have sounded the deathknell of that native tribe.

It is a nice speculation as to what might have happened if Henry VII of England had backed Columbus with ships and men "out o' Devon" as he was requested to do. The Spaniards for their part left little save hatred in the lands they conquered. Had the English come at an earlier date to discover and settle, who knows but that their "New England" might have been the "coral-ribbed" Bahamas and not the "rock-ribbed" land of Massachusetts? The qualities which built up the great states of the Americas' eastern sea-board might have fostered in these islands another "tight little kingdom" overseas.

Somewhere some writer has speculated upon San

Salvador becoming the "Lourdes of the New World." Save for the gesture of the Knights of Columbus, there has so far been no intimation of pilgrimage to this shrine. Somewhere hereabout there must exist the tombs of adventurers who died on these expeditions of Columbus'. This is, of course, peculiarly a shrine to those who are of the faith of him who was "His Most Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain." It is easily accessible to the United States and if its splendid opportunities for a sportsman's holiday become widely known, then it may enjoy wide patronage.

Competition among many religious sects for the souls and contributions of the inhabitants seems to be quite active and the natives seem to enjoy this distinction. Many of the people incline to make changes any time they think them "fo' de better." "Boss man, I'se bin mos' t'ings, all ob dem Christian," said one who had in his day been accepted, baptized and redeemed by many persuasions and who found that at the moment the "Holy Rollers" seemed to rest his spirit. He was a child of the sun, with a good digestion.

What must the Lucayan scene have been like in the fifteenth century? Villages of wattle-work plastered with marl or mud and roofed with palm. Utensils made from seashells and gourds plus a little simple hand-moulded pottery resembling that of the Celtic days. The Lucayans ground their wheat between

stones and they grew extensive crops of corn, perique, sweet potatoes and tobacco. Their food was simple and abundant of its kind—iguana, fish, lobsters (crayfish), crabs, turtles, conchs. They cooked in pots and they must have baked. They had tools, because they left carvings on cave walls. Also the sailors on the *Santa Maria* far out at sea picked up a "strangely carved pole," a bit of flotsam from the islands. Could it have been a totem pole such as one still can find, much decorated among the west coast redmen in British Columbia?

The Lucayans wore little or no clothing but covered themselves with beads of shell and bone. They were mayhap still in the cultural period spoken of as the bronze age; they possessed the simple arts of ornamentation—embroidery worked on skins with bone needles, weapons marked with symbols. No doubt some among them modelled in clay the things they could see and comprehend.

For music the simple folk would have bone and shell whistles and perhaps, like earlier people in the desert places, a telephone system of notes and pipes which might on a still night reach across miles of territory. Evolution had promoted them from cave dwellers to hut dwellers who slept in hammocks; so they were on the way up from the primitive when the Dons came.

These Lucayans live now only in the records of archæology; their people are no more in the Bahamas.

That they were a comely race with light skins and "flat bellies" old manuscripts attest—is this an ungallant slur upon the señoritas of Seville? One may well inquire! Can it be that they were descendants of Mongol tribes which after swarming and milling on Asiatic plains, flooded across the Asian land bridge into North America and pressed southwards through centuries to follow the warm sun and year-round summer?

At the time of the Spanish conquest the Aztec races on the mainland, nearest of kin to these Lucayans, knew the secrets of metal working. One secret died with them—that of copper steel, hard beyond anything modern science has produced. Perhaps in the drama of the lost Atlantis rest their beginnings.

The romance-loving stranger may conjecture much as he wanders over the paths beaten by bare feet into the oolite rocks of San Salvador. Riding between the ridges on which rest the limestone huts, he may conjure a picture of the wattle villages near the Great Lake, hear the ghost pipes call to others over the seas on Pigeon Cay; envisage the hollow-log canoes darting across the surface of the waters; see the bowman spear a fish and come ashore. The tap-tap of the craftsman's hammer of a forgotten race may be recalled by some similarity of sound. The fish in the sea are the same, the ovens built hundreds of years ago of stone and plaster still send out inviting odours. Here and there a thatch shelter may complete an

illusion. And that twisted vine around an upright stump—might it, too, not be a snake symbol of a forgotten worship? San Salvador is a repository of lost things, men and material, but its glamour is renewable to those "who have eyes to see and ears to hear."

The story of San Salvador cannot be closed without the phrase that applies to many American scenes—"Then the Loyalists came." In 1777, during the American Revolution, Major Henry Williams, Colonel Andrew Deveau, John MacDonald, James Hepburn, David Tulby, John Mulyne, John Cornish and James Howe left the mainland colonies and made their homes on the Bahamas on grants of land from the Crown. They became the masters of many slaves and owners of great cotton plantations. It was for a time a life of affluence, dignity and distinction. Some amassed great fortunes and retired to England and Scotland. Mulatto descendants are in evidence, as seems common in the cotton lands. The original estate owners have passed away but their family names are extant in the Bahamas. The ruins of the old homes are in some cases partially occupied by peasant farmers and paint a pathetic picture of the failure of a great development. A description of such an estate on what is now Cat Island is found in old documents. The visiting official recorded the following facts in the year 1861:

"At Port Howe is Miss Fontaris's estate, formerly belonging to Mr. Williams; this estate was supposed to have been one of the best in the Bahamas, particularly for the breeding of cattle and horses, great care having been taken in the improvement of the breed. Thoroughbred stallions were imported from England, and even at this day the blood is visible in the horses of San Salvador. It has now, however, like all others, gone to ruin. The house alone is kept in something of the order of former days. On the walls of the hall are inscribed the names of all visitors, among which are to be found the names of several Governors and officers of the Army and Navy."

There do not seem at the moment to be any new horizons offering hope of a renaissance of economic life. This historic ground has been linked to three great epochs in western world life:

1. A lost race, the Lucayans.
2. The Discovery by Columbus.
3. The American Revolution and the United Empire Loyalists.

These heritages of splendour amid these scenes furnish sharp contrast to the present: today's inhabitants eke out in peasant industries the poor rewards of those who are easily contented. They live under skies of matchless hue and by seas that baffle the artist; night and day they are in the shadow of

the Cross of the *Santa Maria*, while overhead the signal flashes from Dixon Hill guide the world's shipping past their very doors. But none of these surroundings so much as colours the even tenor of simple lives.

Chapter Two

THE TREASURE ISLANDS

*"... heroic hearts
made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."*

CALL the roll of the navigators! Sound the drum of Drake! And from out the sunken, wrecked, or phantom hulks of Raleigh, Drake, Frobisher, Gilbert and Hawkins will step again men who violently paved the way for the mild commercial victories of today. Lust for gold and for piracy guided this vanguard of English conquest as it laid down the sea tracks by which commerce still flows between their motherland and these islands. Hardships terrifying to contemplate were endured on such voyagings by these men whose motives were a strange admixture of curiosity, piety, hope of plunder and a blinding patriotism. It was the age of Elizabeth; Protestant England was united against the Catholic monarchies of Portugal, Spain and France.

With stories like that of Drake to lure them—"a pile of bars of silver . . . seventy feet in height . . . each being between thirty-five and forty pounds in weight"—crews could be found. Men not

of too great scruple—men of Devon, Cornwall and Bristol, or descendants of the Vikings from the smuggler coasts of Scotland—daredevils all, seeking loot that their officers might fail to see; sharing with equal calm of mind the sacraments or the division of spoils from a sacked city. Through the journals they left behind them we learn that they had a code of honour. They died to save each other—"Greater love hath no man"—and they contracted for the delivery of human beings as slaves with the same callous disregard of life's sanctity. Their world was aflame with a passion for conquest that had been loosed in one way by the Renaissance and in another by the perfecting of the magnetic compass.

Roundabout San Salvador lie the islands of romance, "The Treasure Islands." They group themselves amid reefs that are a menace to any but a local seaman and their waters are, as one Conch pilot remarked, "spread thin." Columbus, travelling in great canoes that sometimes were propelled by eight paddlers on each side, visited Rum Cay, Long Island and Crooked Island, and took possession of them. On the map you may see them designated by their picturesque Spanish names. They have individuality, yet hold many traits in common. Each boasts of one outstanding house which is usually whitewashed and has a wall round it, possesses also a tall flagstaff with a British Jack flying. This is the Commissioner's residence. Under the Bahamian system he may be of

either Anglo-Saxon or African descent; is of fair education and of good character. He is magistrate, farm expert, first-aid man, postmaster and father to his community. He is supported by a constable who proudly wears a dark blue uniform and a service cap.

Near the Commissioner's residence you will find a simple, little-used lock-up, a gaol to the islanders—and a courtroom and an office for public business. The law the Commissioner administers is the Common Law of England; he tries minor cases, reserving more serious offenses for the Stipendiary Magistrate who visits the island by boat or plane. Crimes of a major character are infrequent, the native born having a great respect for courts. It is a public disgrace to be haled before "de Commissioner"; also in many villages social ostracism follows any real punishment for crime. And of the two the ostracism is more feared. A "bad man" quickly finds himself in the hands of the Nassau police, so outbreaks of violence such as occur among the negroes in the Southern States are virtually unknown. The administrator of justice is respected, punishment is swift.

The Crooked Islands Passage is well known to sea captains who have sailed by the South Atlantic to Gulf ports. What it was like in the days of the Discovery we can conjecture only from the existence of great denuded areas where wonderful hardwood forests once stood. These went in the phenomenal

boom the islands experienced in the sixteenth century—a boom that was followed by an equally phenomenal fall.

The islands enclosing this passage are Long Cay, Crooked Island, and Acklins, plus, at the southern end, Castle Island, on which there is a modern lighthouse. It was there that I was greeted on landing, by a fresh-complexioned young man of lean build who possessed a Scottish accent and a grimly humorous outlook on the lonely life of a Trinity House (London) engineer. The wide world is the field these men cover; when engaged in lighthouse repairs they and their labourers are often isolated on lonely islands for months at a time.

For both of us the moment was one of suppressed curiosity. I had recently come from Canada, where our family had settled many years before; he had been "three months out from London" on this job. We queried each other's names, touched familiar chords. He also was of Scottish birth; both our memories must have been digging into deep wells—yes, we had it! We had played on the same shores in a far-away corner of historic Scotland. Thus a gap of over thirty years was bridged there on lonely Castle Island. How natural that we should go to luncheon together for a talk on the distant places we had roamed in the years between. My friend's assistant, a Cockney, was staggered by this intimacy and expressed himself bitterly when he found his tongue:

"Gorblime! These bleedin' Scots is heverywhere and they meets like a bleedin' Synt Handrew's Society when they does it! Oh, 'ell." We apologized and allowed him an extra ration from a very short supply of the spirit of our ancestors, whereat he brought out an accordion and sang songs "abaht sweet Henglish Ryoses."

Old charts name these islands the "Fragrant Islands" and they deserve it. The land views are of a surpassing beauty—little hills and valleys and the remains of great dyked estates. The group was the scene of a gold-hunting expedition by the Spaniards and again in the eighteenth century it rose to marked prosperity. Pitts Town on the western shore of Long Island formerly was a port of note—by virtue of regular calls made there by the mail packets between England and the West Indies. Michael Scott has described some of the local scenes and characters in *Tom Cringle's Log*. Plantations were plentiful after the American Revolution and a great trade was done with Jamaica. The time came when an insect pest wiped out the cotton crop, and the plantations and their owners vanished. The peasant farmers who have replaced these gentry seem today to be a sturdy lot, and fairly independent.

Caves hereabout have excited the imaginations of innumerable hunters after hidden wealth. The only treasure that has been recently found, however, is "cave earth," a deposit centuries old that has been

contributed by a pestilence of bats that inhabits the caverns. This bat guano has created considerable wealth for energetic agriculturists. The natives are full of stories of "gran'fadder's" time when from Acklins Island, to which you may wade two and a half miles at low tide, they used to ship out cargoes of ebony wood and brazilletto.

The Commissioner on Long Island is a sporty fellow possessed of an extra set of saddles and guns. Promptly he invited me to a duck-shooting expedition on the Mira-Por-Yos group, little islets on which the birds of the Bahamas find sanctuary. Terns, boobies, bannets, waders and plovers are visible in great numbers, but it is only a sadistic soul who can shoot beyond the capacity of his party for a good stew or fry. We took eight ducks in all and fed six persons, so conscience and skill alike were satisfied.

Labourers here honestly and vigorously deplored the Great War. "Boss man, befo' dat wah we had wuk. De German steamers use't call heah and take de boys on board as stevadohs—dey went down the So' American ports—NO, suh, A'h don' see the sense of dat wah. We had best been clear of dat. Shurely, boss man, dat wah'nt no affair of ours." I could not, of course, dispute the matter. The reasons for the Hamburg American liners ceasing to call are doubtless economic, but the departure from the former practice was due to politics and was far too involved a matter to explain to this disappointed man on a

lone island far from the commercial antagonisms of Europe.

Columbus it was, no less, who made us familiar with the delights of Long Island in his great day. The women, so he wrote, wore a headdress "and small pieces of cotton." They cultivated the fibre and, being vain, exchanged quantities of cloth for beads. Doubtless there were exchanges of other kinds, possibly private agreements that were to become permanent "when the ships come back next year."

Long Island's history seems to have gaps of nearly one hundred years each, which one finds it impossible to fathom. Offsetting this is the fact that this island has yielded up many relics of Lucayan life and one skeleton reputed to be that of a seven-foot man. Among the later dwellers hereabouts a few of the Loyalists have left souvenirs of their stay. More than five hundred of them were settled here by 1788 and scattered pineapple plantations recall their once lucrative industry. The remains of several stately old mansions stand out on neglected hillsides.

The Earl of Dunmore was one of the Proprietors and there is a link with the Canadian Regiment called the Queen's Rangers in the story of an ex-officer of the "Originals" who served under Howe and Clinton in the American Revolution. This Dalziel Smith, a refugee, asked as a reward for his war service that he be granted this island of 20,000 acres. It was to be compensation for his losses and for his

leadership in raising the Queen's Rangers. The modest man did not obtain the coveted reward.

In and out of this group from time to time have threaded the sloops of war of nearly every pirate leader known to history. The reason: the lands were always deeply clothed in rich pampas grass and the wells held a constant supply of fresh water. Here and there the remains of old gun batteries are to be found, indicating that the inhabitants protected themselves against these unwelcome visitors who flew the Jolly Roger.

Here exists something for all who have sailed the cays of the Florida chain to marvel at. Here it is: an archipelago lying close to American shores that literally teems with bird and fish life, a very paradise for an angler—and yet deserted. Literally it is a world apart from busy America, a region that it seems will never be overcrowded with humans.

A day in a dory yielded some four dozen large fish by rod or hand line and these fed one small settlement. The radio installed by the Bahamas Government gave us a daily news summary. The beaches are unrivalled for fine sand and slope gently to the reefs. The fields produce enough fresh fruit to keep the table constantly supplied. The Crooked Islands have all the charm of the tropics, plus a touch of northern woods to stem attacks of nostalgia for those who wander here from Canada or the States.

Perhaps the most revealing of all Lucayan remains

in this group are those found on the neighbouring Rum Cay. At the point called Indian Hole one stoops through a low entrance into ancient caves. Step inside, use a good flashlight, and you will find curious markings. Down deep there are carvings which only long hours of labour under somewhat distressing physical conditions will uncover. They are still not wholly deciphered. They indicate Lucayan origin in part and are of marked similarity to carvings found on some of the southerly islands. A few of the symbols might well be the crude markings of ignorant men, perhaps pirates who carved special designs to mark the resting places of their dead; others are of distinctly Spanish origin. The average man will be content with a cursory "look-see" and depart. Much of the easily removable material, I am informed, has been taken away and is to be seen in museums in English-speaking countries.

In the piratical year 1509 some 40,000 persons were shipped away from these islands to labour in the sugar mills and the mines of Hispaniola, so it seems certain that there must exist somewhere further revealing traces of so large a population. The Spaniards took the Lucayan aborigines they could find, but it is doubtful if they took all their goods and chattels. As late as 1647 there is a record of "Indians" being alive in the Bahamas. Probably they were the remnants of some family that escaped to a lonely cay during the deportation.

The shore trip to Rum Cay yielded an interesting hour. I was a guest of a sister of the late Rear Admiral Forsyth of the United States Navy. This Bahamian-born lad enlisted in America's sea forces and by diligence and enthusiasm for his tasks rose to wear an admiral's star. His semi-invalid sister received me in a room filled with mementoes—portraits, swords, medals and commissions.

After long years spent in America, she had returned to the old family place. Her interest in affairs of the great nearby continent was still acute and it was good to be able to talk again of cities where the streets were filled with people and to see how this exile, though physically at home, still lived in spirit in the land of her younger years.

We were riding home, my mount a shaggy-legged Bahamian pony, jogging easily. The high-pommel Mexican saddle was a strange seat to one long accustomed to cavalry equipment. My companion was the Commissioner, a man of some intellectual taste and an ex-South African.

The talk had ranged about the Lucayans and the Aztec civilizations, when the question suddenly came—"What was happening in England and the rest of the world about the time Columbus came?" The query was a poser because so much was happening. The kingdoms of modern history had just taken shape. England had given up any claims to the throne of France as well as any pretensions to sov-

ereignty in Scotland. The Tudor dynasty was on the throne. France had acknowledged Louis IX. In Spain the Moorish kingdom of Granada had been conquered and annexed and the last Moslem state in the extreme western world had been ended. Germany was a confederation of principalities, bishoprics, states and free cities, professedly recognizing as Emperor the head of the House of Hapsburg. The Spanish throne was consolidating the union of the Houses of Castile and Aragon.

What had given the impetus to this westward march of empire was that the conquests of Mohammed and the fall of Constantinople had closed the trade routes to the East. Therefore, the Mediterranean sea-cities of Genoa and Venice, despite their tremendous riches and widespread trading systems, were idle. The urge was for new markets and new trading. It was really the fall of Constantinople and the collapse of the Eastern Greek Church before the armies of Mohammed which released the energies and ambitions of explorers. It was in 1456 that the Crescent flew as a victor's flag over the last home of that Cæsar who had made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire. So Columbus had grown up in a day of adventure and of restlessness—of gunpowder coming into use, of hand cannon on the field of battle, and of the printing press starting out toward its destined mastery of democracy.

On the trail we rode it may be that in those far-

away times some fair-skinned Lucayan and his sweetheart walked happily, looking out over the then untravelled channels by his home, all unknowing that in far-away Asia Minor the Crescent had replaced the Cross. Or that in a few years' time, for that reason, he would be faced by invaders who bore the defeated symbol aloft on their banners and gripped in mailed hands swords forged of Toledo steel. A very minor victim he in the great dissolution of peoples resulting from the Moslem upthrust; he was just a bit of chaff between the upper and the nether millstone. As a future portion he could look forward to death in slavery. A pleasant prospect.

But the Spaniards suffered in their turn. English buccaneers visited on them a vengeance that may be called poetic. These islands are reputed to have been the scenes of many gatherings of the pirate crews and their leaders when repairs to their ships or the need of dividing spoil drove them ashore. A glance at the map will reveal how suited the islands are for buccaneers' hidings out and how nicely they spread themselves along the route from Europe to Cuba and Panama. Esquemeling, a noted leader of such gentry, after years at his trade reformed himself into a respected citizen of England and wrote a description of the group, incidentally revealing how cruel was the fate of stray vessels caught by these cutthroats.

There are tales of marooning on islands without

food or water and of death by slow torture in that victims were tied naked to mangrove trees and left to die. A cloud of insects would make fairly quick work of them. When both Spaniards and Britons charged atrocities to the opposing sides it was the Englishmen who became particularly vocal and enlisted Parliament on their side. The English sea captains' cause was thus given the aspect of a crusade—soon it was no crime to rob Spaniards. That was one reason why not all who flew the cross of St. George when going into action were men of England. One Monbars, a Frenchman, became known as "the Destroyer." Lewis Scott, an Englishman, and two others, Morgan and Davis, who were Welsh, were accustomed to haul up regularly in the sheltered bays of this "Treasure Islands" group. On nearly every island a treasure story is in circulation and is trotted out for the visitor by some of the owners of schooners. It stimulates the hiring of boats. Treasure seeking is a healthful pastime which may well be undertaken as a change from fishing and exploring.

An unusually candid Spanish missionary once said that his countrymen had always three objects in taking a country: one was to look for gold, the second to conduct themselves immorally, and the third to convert the natives by torturing them. Equally candidly it might be said that those under the English ensign, who drove these Dons from the seas, had as their objectives "To serve the Queen, to disrupt

the trade of the Dons, and to do it in the name of God; also to do all this without becoming so objectionable that a pardon could not be obtained," the aim being that one might retire in comparative affluence. That they achieved these purposes is attested by the names of admirals and governors on the rolls of those who were honoured, through the influence of the Merchants' Guilds, with titles and territories.

A trip to these interesting islands would be incomplete if in passing through one did not, by a visit to the little churches and cemeteries, glimpse the great period after 1778 when the Simms, Knowles, Darville, Fox, Mackenzie and Forsyth families, besides many others, built magnificent homes and assumed sway over huge plantations. Their social life was a reproduction of what they had known in pre-Revolution America, but it is recorded that their care for the slaves was marked. They built roads, imported good horses, drove in carriages, lived generally in luxury. They possessed good furniture of the Duncan Phyfe period; one can still find odd pieces preserved from these spacious mansions. Some of their cut glass and silver tableware is yet in use; having been handed down to present-day generations that are now far removed in wealth and in the amenities from their forefathers. The freeing of the slaves marked the closing days of a rather splendid era controlled by well-born and gentle-blooded people. As you ride about the island, you will find, now and

then, the resounding names of these old families applied incongruously enough to small groups of huts; often to groups that were originally merely the slave quarters for estates. The names are predominatingly of English, Ulster and Scots origin.

It would be a pity if, having the chance of a trip on the mail schooner, one did not go south to Inagua Island—once the El Dorado of the salt workers. The trip itself will be an interesting experience—and a stimulating one if you possess a passion for mathematics. I found the *Alisada's* coloured master, a huge six-footer Bain by name, poring over Euclid when off watch. Alternating with this hobby came his studies in navigation. Aid came to him on this trip from an aged Church of Scotland minister who was making a tour. The curling grey locks of the son of the hills and the black crown of the skipper were close together when I went to sleep. Now and again I would wake up and overhear the rich burr of the Highlander interlarded with the soft speech of the Bahamas, and two pencils would be scribbling and marking copies of Euclid.

"Aye—now ye have it, captain! Ye've got it."

"Tha's ri'"—a short laugh. "A've found it, that seems simple now"—and so on far into the night.

It occurred to me that this worthy captain may have been unaware that this Scots accent was the same that his ancestors had heard on the tongue of Mungo Park, the explorer, or that the dwellers in

Central Africa had puzzled over when David Livingstone struggled with their languages. Later I heard these two, standing by the wheel, busily cataloging the heavenly constellations and picking out the stars. This time the captain was instructor.

Inagua must have been a place of importance. It has great wide streets and the ruins of former homes strike a poignant note; because they are set about what must have been a handsome township. Here is the Bahamian port nearest to Haiti; one that had intimate connection with the rise and fall of Christophe, Haiti's black Emperor. It was on Inagua that he had his summer home.

There were only two white women resident on the island when I visited it, but some twenty years before there had been many prosperous whites engaged in the salt business. Salt is created in huge ponds—great level stretches into which the sea water is flooded through a canal and wherein evaporation leaves the salt in layers. One notable relic of the heyday of this trade is a great limestone warehouse in Mathew Town. The remains of an old railroad can be seen and I was told that until a few years ago a little pug engine used to haul the gathered salt from the pond to the warehouse. Just now this business is experiencing a revival; men are actively gathering and cleaning salt for export, a new market having been opened in the southern United States. It will be a long time, however, before the commercial

glory of the early and late nineteenth century can be restored.

One marked difference here from other islands is that even-surfaced roadways enable one to drive in comfort. To the wayfarer this seems quite a change from the crude highways elsewhere encountered. "This looks like a real country," remarked one of my companions on one island expedition. We were out of sight of the sea and before us stretched miles of pampas and bush. Herds of wild horses, asses and cattle roamed at will over this prairie beside a huge inland lake. These herds are "de run wild" descendants of the fine stock brought here in the days of prosperity. They have grown small by interbreeding, but are sturdy and healthy and they provide "beef" for feast days.

Until a few years ago it was possible to come down from New York by Dutch steamers and reach Mathew Town, on Inagua, where a stop was made to pick up stevedores for dock work in South America. Also there were boom times—and a great plenitude of money—in the days when the Panama Canal was being built and Bahamian labourers who were digging the vast ditch sent most of their pay back home. Nowadays the Inagua men appear disheartened as they stand around in idleness. Yet they have ample opportunity to fish, work their fields and hunt. For food they are better off than the natives on most of the other islands. Also, so it seems to me,

a little more habituated to the white man and his ways.

This is a place to tempt the gourmet's palate; one of its table dishes I greatly enjoyed was lobster, broiled and served with limes and butter. This last came from a tin carrying the dairy mark of "Nova Scotia." None could excel the hospitality that was shown here to a lone wanderer. The leading merchants would have me to tea and the Commissioner gave me a farewell gift of two chickens. On my departure the ship's dory contained all the coconuts I could eat or drink; in addition, a sturdy little Ford car had been mine to command for days.

The markings on the caves here are distinctive. Hidden in the neighbourhood is some of Christophe's treasure, gold he buried in order to provide a nest egg should disaster befall him. The interior of the island resembles western Canada and it needed only a moment of illusion to replace in the mental vision the coarse grass with fields of waving grain. This island had no settlement by the Loyalists; perhaps the reason lay in its great distance from Nassau, then as now the seat of government. It is said that at one stormy period in the colony's history it was thought that the executive offices would be removed from Nassau to Inagua for safety's sake.

The greatest thrill of the trip came early one evening when I saw a sunset flight of flamingos circling over the north end of the lake, their delicate pink

colouring enriched by the deep red of the sun's rays. Armed with a camera I lay beside the lake for hours next day and tried for pictures. Recalling every bit of deer-stalker's lore—that I knew, I employed the best northern methods of approaching my "game" only to have my venture come to an inglorious end in a muddy puddle. My knees were scratched, I was soaked in brackish water and the camera in which I had placed my faith showed of the flamingos—just nothing! Yet a second before they had either dotted the sky or been standing in stilted dignity a few hundred feet away. Efforts have been made to take some of these birds to New Providence, but they do not seem to survive far from native waters. One theory advanced is that they require salt-encrusted ponds to feed in. As I returned to the car the old Scots clergyman blandly commented: "Ye're no Nimrod wi' a camera at any rate."

Since this episode I have wondered whether a great many pictures of bird life shown by the photographers may not have been snapped in the savage environs of the Hollywood studios. This exotic bird, the flamingo, builds a high nest on sticks and is by far the most timid creature of the wilds I have ever tried to get acquainted with. A friend who sought to get an "imperishable" moving picture—the first of its kind—built himself a shelter, covered himself with brushwood, lay for hours in the broiling sun

and came back boasting of thousands of feet "of the stuff." Alas! his camera film had run out at the start and in his excitement he had cranked away industriously without noticing his lack.

A few hours' hunting gave us a brace of spoonbill but we scored several misses in shooting at "Little Bahama" ducks. Pelicans were also in the air and I noticed stilt and willets. They too were observant, which is as it should be on all good shoots. We had turtle soup and roast duck for supper and that cannot be improved upon. The fowl tasted just as good as canvasback in New York's Commodore, while the Lord Mayor's banquet in London could not have improved upon the soup. Our exercise gave the meal a zest, and the fact that we got a major portion of it by our own efforts and skill added unusual savour.

The condition of agricultural life in the islands, not alone in Inagua, indicates that the natives love the sea more than the land. Why should it not be so? These men, white and African, come of stocks that had contacts with every phase of seagoing; on merchant ships, with the buccaneers and in the murderous trade of wrecking. The greatest prosperity known to the islands was sea-born, so these people are descendants of families bred to sea interests. In the blood of the Conch there are several strains, but of them all the greatest is that which traces back to the ports of Britain.

The battles these men fought along the seaboard of the Caribbean and throughout the Spanish Main were waged principally to extinguish the glory of Cadiz. One can say that it was the intrepidity of Bristol which overcame the prowess of Seville. Who stood successfully against these hard-bitten sea dogs? Not Spain, nor Portugal, nor Holland, nor France! These men whose bones are found today in graves dug deep into the rocks of Inagua and the sister islands in the north were fighters. But once they left the sea for the softer berths of land they settled here and there and bred into the races they found. Their Viking blood transmitted a genius for the ways of the sea; their characteristics moulded a generation or so; their own names still fill the census lists of the colony.

Looking away across the waters from Salt Pond Hill one can see on a clear day the dim outline of Cuba, ninety-odd miles away. The seas between carried in steady stream the mighty caravels of Spain that followed in the wake of Columbus. Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Juan Ponce de Leon crossed here with their venturesome ships. By this route the African Emperor Christophe journeyed in state to his residence in the coolness of a land blessed with constant trade winds. Teach, Hornigold, Rackham and Vane, hell-hounds among seafarers, have desecrated its beauty with their presence. Throughout the ages Inagua has stood like a sentry on the highway

of civilization in the Caribbean Seas; therefore, her shores have been trod in succession by many men who have borne on behalf of their respective sovereigns the adventurers' great command: "Enter and seek and find and hold forever in my name."

Chapter Three

THE VIKING STRAIN

*"Our race was ripe when the Vikings came—
And their wine in our blood runs free."*

OLIVER CROMWELL, Lord High Protector of England, and his successor, King Charles II, both played parts in the development of the Bahamas. Their contrasting motives in making grants of settlement provide, I feel, interesting side lights on their characters.

Cromwell had made the name of England respected. Charles was to drag it through the mire of his debauchery and to leave little behind save dishonour and an unparalleled record for deceit. Cromwell dreamt of the maritime power of an island kingdom, temporarily republican, while the last of the Stuarts left his people to the political machinations of court favourites.

Probably it was an especial bit of favouritism that resulted in the Bahamas being given to the Lord Proprietors of Carolina. To understand what happened when the first governor, a John Wentworth, came under the direction of the Proprietors one must read his letters to Lord Ashley, now in the archives

of the Government in London. In that day the town of Nassau was pirate-infested, lawless, disease-ridden and a mere rendezvous for the licentious relaxations of the buccaneers. Wentworth was openly threatened by the pirates and the citizens had no desire that he should interfere with the freebooters. After a painful experience he left in haste from an unwelcome office.

His successor was evidently more compliant, yet a stronger character, because his régime made the colony prosperous. In all probability he made a deal with local pirate chiefs and secured some degree of content. His name was Lilburn and his tenure of office was ended by a Spanish invasion from Cuba. He was, some say, roasted alive by his captors.

Doubtless feeling that these lusty sons of Belial had been taught a lesson, the Cubans left. But—alas! for their trade with Spain—the buccaneers promptly returned and re-created the rendezvous. Once more the galleons were in danger.

Jones, a Welshman, came out as Governor and held his head high and levied taxes for his private purse. To enforce his decrees he had the pirates, with whom he was greatly in favour, train their ships' guns on the Council Chamber. The citizens rose in wrath, seized him and locked him up, but one Avery, a pirate leader, let him loose. Next in line came a Mr. Trot who seems to have achieved fame during his sojourn by being concerned in the finding of treasure. One Adderley, a local pilot, received eight tons

of silver for his services. What the total discovery was is not told. The tone of the court seems to have infected the proconsuls of the Lords Proprietors. They took what there was to take and made their way out, some in disgrace, some to exile, and a few to a reasonably secure retirement.

The next phase was that of a mulatto named Eldon who brought a commission to govern that had been signed by Nicholas Webb, a trusty (?) servant of their Lordships. For two glorious years Nassau was run as the ships' councils ran the pirate vessels. Prosperity came again and the citizens and pirates once more worked hand in hand. But in 1701 heavy pressure was brought to bear on the Proprietors, with the sharp result that a man of determination who was also peculiarly enthusiastic about honesty in his administration took over the Bahamas. By name, Elias Hackett.

His stiff rule caused a rebellion, pirates and citizens combining against him. Hackett was forcibly seized, put in chains and shipped to England with a memorial protesting that "he was like unto the devil—and with the addition of drink oh! he is worse than Satan himself, for then his temper is only equalled by his profligacy."

Not a colourless document this, considering that it originated with pirate-protected, God-fearing émigrés, some of whom had sought freedom of conscience away from England! Elias Lightwood, who

had the favour of sea rover and profiteering islander alike, governed next by appointment from the people themselves and without any reference to the wishes of the great Carolinian body upon which the royal Charles had bestowed a charter.

Alackaday! Back came the Spaniards, more exasperated than ever, and this time thoroughly cleaned out the "pestiferous" inhabitants. Wrecking of the forts, dismounting of the guns, fire, pillage, vengeance, put final end to the régime of those favoured so signally by the Merry Monarch. One more attempt the Lords Proprietors made to assume their rights, but their representative found himself on a deserted island and without people to rule or a place for shelter. He left to report that the nest had been robbed. Most histories have passed hurriedly over these vitally interesting years. Yet seldom have documents held a richer story of human character and action.

This was the heyday of scoundrelism in so far as the English settlement of the New World is concerned. Nassau, then called Charles Town, was the "port of lost men" who had fled beyond the law. To evade punishment in their own countries they had taken to the high seas and piracy as other types had taken to the king's highway and to robbery at pistol's point. Old Bay Street where it stretches by the inner harbour saw "high jinks," we may be sure. Strangely enough there is scarcely a document to be

found that gives family records of that pre-imperial rule. The Spaniards did their job of destruction with amazing thoroughness. Also it is not impossible that reputable families and communities of today have been only too willing that records that carried the dark red blot of shame should go up in smoke.

Do not, however, presume that, following this Spanish holocaust in Nassau, the town never glowed again. On the contrary, the scattered ships which had escaped the vengeance came back one by one. The houses crept up again stone by stone. The blackened roots of the trees revived to life and green leaves peeped out. The "wreckers" on the islands needed a metropolis to trade in. Nassau got away to such a new start that George I, upon the petition of London and Bristol merchants, decided to send Captain Woodes Rogers, a reformed privateer master and marauder of the Spanish Main to restore order and suppress the pirates—aided by a company of fifty soldiers.

The newly-begun trend towards respectability in the Caribbean drew strange aid. The infamous Henry Morgan was seeking pardon and becoming a contributor to the Treasury in England and a builder of chapels. On the principle of setting a thief to trap thieves he was made Governor of Jamaica. As Sir Henry, he was now as thorough a disciplinarian in behalf of decency as he had been in maintenance of a bloody rule among the buccaneers. Death sen-

tences, free use of chains as punishments, plantation slavery and the wholesale seizing of erring ships combined to make his name a thing of terror and himself a wealthy squire in but a few years. He is reputed to have died in Jamaica but his burial place is known to no one.

Woodes Rogers, upon taking over civil government in the name of His Most Glorious Majesty in 1718 must have had quite a thrill as he marched with his little company up the street through a so-called "guard of honour" that was in bitter fact comprised of pirates. Plain buccaneers, men without the law, inducting into office the representative of the law. Some of them doubtless were veteran shipmates of his earlier ventures. Case-hardened, ribald ruffians who had followed or were of the brotherhood of Teach, Vane, Hornigold, Burgess, Rennes, Fife, Martell and that saved soul, Samuel Speed. This latter rascalion it was who, retiring in good time from the sea, became a Church of England clergyman, and later in life distinguished himself strangely as a chaplain in a naval battle with the Dutch. Upon that occasion, casting aside the unctuous accents of his later calling to renew the ecstasies of earlier days, it is said of him that, with oaths on his lips and a cutlass in hand for boarding he led his shipmates in the hand-to-hand.

One of the most colourful pictures in the history of the islands that have witnessed many colourful

exploits is this scene of the induction of the new Governor. As Woodes Rogers passed along the ranks of this "honour guard" the freebooters kept up a continuous discharge from muskets and pistols. One wonders whether some jocular fellow did not give a comrade's hail or drop an eyelid in attempted familiarity. Woodes Rogers, however, had come to do business at a new stand. He instituted summary courts-martial, put the citizens on oath as civic police, patrolled the town after curfew with local militia under his regular officers and non-coms, and started upon a sewerage and sanitation campaign. Getting out a notice of Royal Pardon to all who agreed to forsake pirate ways, he found many recalcitrants. He was compelled to hang nine of them in what is now the garden of the New Colonial Hotel. Not unmindful of the need of repentance, he held them forty-five minutes under the gallows tree in order that they might have opportunity to be absolved spiritually. One of the group thus doomed was saved at the last minute by a petition of the citizens and the representations of his reformed friends, now sworn in as officers of the Crown. Another regretted he had been so "easy-going as a pirate" and another, just before the end, kicked off his shoes and thus kept his long-standing oath "never to die with his boots on."

That must have been a stirring day in old Nassau and the survivors must have gazed with some degree of trepidation at the house on the hill where this stout

fellow who had dealt out punishment so rigidly was drinking his port and smoking a long-stemmed clay of rare Virginia.

The new occupations henceforth were to be husbandry, the cultivation of pineapples and coconuts; Bahamians were to travel the quiet uneventful ways of well-ordered folk. That was the intention, but a different spirit lingered; memories of days and nights at sea, the Viking desire for the great waters and the freedom from restraints of towns and families; so there came about the development of "wrecking." At selected places all over the colony, from the Biminis to Abaco, Harbour Island and Eleuthera, grew up the practices of showing false channel lights, and giving false counsel when piloting. In connivance with certain receivers of "ships' merchandise" on shore, a profitable business got under way. It grew, thrived and absorbed more and more the efforts of the natives until again His Majesty's Government stepped in. By the building of lighthouses and the filling of local jails it gave a quietus to the "last phase" in the metamorphosis of the descendants of the men of the "Skull and Crossbones."

Changed days came. Devout men who had found that even in the New World of America liberty of worship could be circumscribed by arbitrary governors, started to arrive. Germans of pronouncedly Protestant minds and God-fearing families came from the Eastern States of America. George II was king.

The colonies began to assume importance in the eyes of the English Government. They had a strategic value and were admirably suited for tactical exercises against the Spaniards. A second term was granted Woodes Rogers and he, finding that the democratic demands of the American settlers required more than mere executive government, instituted the House of Assembly. In the same year a plan was made for Nassau to become the seat of government. Its name, by the way, was conferred upon it in the reign of William III and was taken from his illustrious father's title of Prince of Nassau. In earlier times it was called Charles Town, and is described as a straggling village with a few stone houses and palmetto huts. The colony's population was confined to New Providence, Harbour Island and Eleuthera. It is on record that it was composed of about one thousand whites, one hundred soldiers and nine hundred sixty-four slaves.

In a search for war stores in 1776 Admiral Esek Hopkins of the very new United States Navy took his ships on their first cruise to Nassau, hoping to "seize the powder and shot stored there in Forts Nassau and Montagu." The town surrendered and after a day's stay the American fleet, composed of the *Alfred*, *Columbus*, *Andrea Dorea*, *Cabot*, *Providence*, *Hornet*, *Wasp*, and *Fly*, sailed away with the Governor, Montfort Browne, and the Inspector General of Customs in North America as hostages.

The value of the exploit can be realized only by

a study of its background. Annapolis naval students may well enjoy this effort as a contribution to the humorous side of the sea-fighting exploits of their predecessors. Its execution cannot but cause in equal degree a slight wonder in those who, recalling the fighting ancestry of the colonials, seek to determine why Nassau so readily acquiesced in the demand for surrender. "Oh!" one might sigh, "for a few Teaches, Vanes, or Hornigolds and their crews!" Then that glorious day of new navalism might have met such a defence as would have thrilled a world.

As an aftermath to the exploit, the Congress, duly assembled at Philadelphia, severely censured the Admiral because he missed capturing a British ship, though it congratulated the fleet on its successful mission. Among the souvenirs the victors carried away an infection of the dread smallpox and some two hundred shipmates fell heir to the scourge. What powder and shot had no chance to do in defence, the germ-infected environs of some taverns doubtless can claim credit for. The fleets of Paul Jones and the Stars and Stripes have returned only once since—save on goodwill tours.

Doubtless the two hundred guns taken away from Nassau without resistance on that day, the large quantities of shell and fifteen barrels of gunpowder helped to destroy the defences of Lord Howe, of Gage, Burgoyne and others who, at bay in the rebellious colonies, confirmed the adage of history that the Brit-

ish Army of the period resembled "lions led by asses."

The spirit and temper of the times had changed from 1718. Many there were in Nassau who carried no fond memory of seventeenth century English officials and their arrogance in even minor appointments in Virginia, the Carolinas and New York; add to this the fact that Governor Fitzwilliam in 1733 had alienated loyalty to the titular representative of His Majesty by irrational and despotic assumptions and regulations. He had been deposed, but his aroma lingered. Some psychological effect therefrom doubtless influenced the attitude of the community—outside of the imported British officials—in regard to the American Revolution. A sympathy arose for some of the reasons for rebellion, if not with the act itself. There was a distinct leaning towards neutrality.

After much reflection upon the incident of the surrender of Nassau, one wonders whether there was not just a tinge of political sympathy, an understanding comprehension of the reason which brought the invading fleet into being?

The links with the old colonies in America had been close and constant. Whatever mail there was came largely from relatives and friends there. Commerce flowed between the two. There was no incompatibility of spirit, because each had the outlook of the frontier and of pioneer lands. In a small and relatively unimportant way the Bahamas took a part

in the birth of the political philosophy which, by the action of the thirteen American colonies, was to give a new direction to the relations of the peoples within the Empire. The islands were also to receive fresh life and a renewed vigour born of the influx which came by the settlement of hundreds of United Empire Loyalists from 1782 onwards.

Another foreign invasion was endured, however, before this occurred. In 1782 a Spanish expedition commanded by Don Juan de Cavigal descended from Cuba upon Nassau—found its garrison in sick bay and its militia too poorly equipped to resist such a force, and took possession. The ease of the conquest made for carelessness. Garrison life in the narrow confines of the colony was irksome to a large command, so much of it was returned to Havana. Discipline rotted under the inactivity of such a service, their watches were lightly kept, so the sentries at Fort Montagu found themselves overwhelmed at dawn a year later by a Colonel Andrew Deveau, of the Loyal South Carolina Militia, with about two hundred men. Many of these attackers were armed somewhat as were Massachusetts farmers at Lexington—possessed only the cutlass in use on their farms as a bush-clearing implement. The troops were asleep in their quarters when the surprise attack took place. Deveau moved the lightest of the guns by noon of that day to the hills east of Fort Nassau, then fired

into Fort Nassau itself and at Government House. And so forced the Spanish garrison's surrender.

Deveaux should be hailed as a William Tell of the colony. He did more than merely recapture Nassau; he gave a military tradition to families that in the preceding years had, because of lack of adequate leadership, lain supine under official discouragement of anything resembling a "rebel and warlike reflection of the American colonists." For his services Deveaux later received a large tract of land on Cat Island.

The scenes of these exploits that resulted in the recapture of Nassau can be easily visited. The Fort Montagu site is cared for as a public park and adjoins the hotel of that name. The daring of the act is magnified when the actual sea landing, the silent approach to the palisaded enclosure (now, of course, removed) and the quick work in the gateway where the sentry was too slow to give the alarm, are visualized on the ground.

This leader had the qualities of the trench raider and in a campaign of our day he would have found full scope for his abilities. In his times there were barely 800 white persons in the colony; additionally, there were at least 2,300 slaves.

This dramatic incident occurred in an age when the embryo British Overseas Empire was in death struggle with France and Spain. Her troubles in America were manifold, but her beleaguered situa-

tion elsewhere at sea and on land was too absorbing to permit of exclusive attention being given to them. The far-away portions of the incipient commonwealth we know today had to fend for themselves; yet in 1784, when the stream of Loyalists commenced to come, it was from sorely-tryed England that supplies of food, clothing and farm equipment arrived to succour "her children who had lost their homes for her dear sake!" The ships came to bring necessities for the homeless and left deep-laden with island cotton. Prosperity was again on the horizon for the colony.

So the colony thrived through some thirty years of peaceful development. The struggle between King, Lords and Commons going on in the motherland had its colonial counterpart in the sometimes acrid relationships of the governors and the governed. The Loyalists finally numbered over six thousand and they peopled the islands south to San Salvador. These were men accustomed to local autonomy and they insisted on framing the laws under which they would live. As early as 1785 they had forced a dissolution of the House and were masters of the local constituencies in New Providence. The Earl of Dunmore as Governor, 1786, saw the inception of a new era and began building Fort Fincastle and Fort Charlotte, restorations of which we see today. At the latter certain guides are uniformed in the scarlet coat and wig of the old 47th Regiment which once garrisoned the

fort. The colourful Zouave uniform of the early nineteenth century and the khaki undress uniform of the Palestine Expeditionary Force of 1918 clothe others.

It might be said that in the years of Deveaux a new type of Bahamian developed. The planter grew and flourished. He was a man with his possessions deep-rooted in Bahamian soil. Having widespread local interests, both financial and social, he was in a position in marked contrast to that of his predecessors in the country, men who had lived in instant danger amid all kinds of license and outlawry. Slavery was, of course, the cornerstone of the economic structure. The old market in the Vendue house was the clearing mart for the disposal of these human wares. The writers of that day record that the slaves in the Bahamas were better cared for on the whole than those in America, and seemed to be happier and more contented.

Nevertheless, trouble was brewing. In England the movement for the abolition of slavery was led by Lord Wilberforce and the question was being strenuously forced upon the attention of Lords and Commons. Public emotion stirred the non-conformists particularly to demand the ending of the abuse. In August 1834 the Emancipation Bill passed amid prognostications of ruin. It was only after a period of outright defiance of the statute that the Bahama slave-owners acceded to it. Actually four years passed before the colony took legal action. To recompense

these recalcitrant slave masters the British Treasury paid them 128,296 pounds sterling, or something over twelve pounds per slave.

Mixed views prevailed. The reformers in their high enthusiasm missed the fact that no education had prepared the slaves for freedom, also that a large proportion of them were simply being cast out to multiply and starve without the white fellow citizen having any responsibility for them.

Time has told its tale. What Booker T. Washington has done for a selected negro group in giving opportunities for self-help and educating them for a respected place as citizens, British rule is doing on a mass scale in the Bahamas.

No road up is easy. The slopes of Parnassus are for the quick brains and eager limbs of those fitted to ascend. The kindergarten will always be needed because at no time can all the human swarm keep place and time on the march. The grandsons of slaves are respected members of the law and medical professions in the Bahamas and sit for several constituencies in the House of Assembly. From a place as field hand and chattel to a good social position based on scholarship and on ability to hold one's place in the universities of Great Britain is quite a jump in two generations. It is a leap that has for its basis the undoubted fact that where the white race is dominant there the black man has made the greatest cultural progress. The British Colonial Office may blunder oc-

casionally, but in the long run its policies are justified by good results for many concerned.

Not a fraction of what might be written has been said in this short sketch. These words are but poor things unless one's footsteps have taken one up and down the byways of New Providence. Where the outlaws of the sea careened their boats you may see other sailing vessels tip-tilted on the beaches of today.

The chap in the well-washed overalls may be the descendant of a Loyalist settler "who went poor" in his generation, and the cheerful darky with him may be the grandson of one of the slaves on the estate of the other fellow's "grandpappy."

They, as boatmen, labour in some relationship expressed by the related titles "Boss" and "Boy." Side by side they work amicably as master and employee; did not their forefathers travel together through strenuous times of pestilence and storm?

In 1852 came cholera from Florida. It filled the graveyards, with black tombstones and it scattered the population of New Providence far and wide over the eight or nine hundred islands of the colony. The negroes perished in scores. It swept away some of the finest of the stocks and then, after raging for a year, went away. Today it is only a memory. To understand its terrors one must have lived with about fifteen thousand persons trapped by it on an island. It made social intercourse impossible and it shattered business. It was no respecter of persons and it left

tales of heroism among both races; stories of devotion as well as desertion; of self-immolation and of fear that took years to heal.

But the little island had not finished with devastation. It had in a short period to face again new disasters by hurricanes in 1853, '56, '57, and '58. Nevertheless, property values improved, streets were relaid. Its life—a threatened thing for a century or two—was to thrive and become consolidated by the sheer grit and unbeatable human qualities which had given it birth.

Not the pirates and their constant menace; not the Spaniards and the sacking of their homes; not the invaders nor the thrall they laid upon its life; not fire nor sword, not pestilence nor the "acts of God" could stem the flowing life nor halt the islanders' will to live.

I opened the scene of this crowded recital with a line or so from A. G. Hales, at one time the greatest war correspondent of the old campaigns in the Balkans and South Africa. To him such a thing as I have dealt with would in telling have been the living drama that it really has been and always will be. To him, as he wrote it down, the streets would have brimmed with men in the tawdry and rich trappings of the buccaneer. Pistols and daggers would have been made to play their living part as he visioned the scene. He would have taken the Viking theme he

loved so well and woven it into the lives of this sub-tropic people.

I hope, however, that, seated by his deep ingle fire at Mauchline Castle in Ayrshire, he will read this—and that in the firelight there will come to him a vision of these scenes I have so feebly outlined—and that, taking up his pen again, he will write his greatest romance. For such a theme his is a master hand.

*“Let the buckster brawl in the market-place,
Let the fop and the fool pass by,
While the Viking strain with us remain,
Our glory can never die.”*

Chapter Four

CHILDREN OF THE FOREST

*A little work, much rest, our share of sorrow—
Laugh, sing and talk—all careless of the morrow.
—Chant of the Careless Sons*

THE "Good Queen Bess"—Elizabeth, royal mistress of England—was an early investor in the slave traffic. She furnished money to buy five hundred slaves in the venture of "My Lord Hawkins," who opened up "the trade" with Gambia, West Africa. The slimy business started with a certain John Locke, who, in 1557, decided to take to London five Coast boys he had captured. His enterprise was rebuffed however, and a storm of criticism for his activities ensued. He could not sell the slaves, was even compelled to return them to what is now probably Sierra Leone. But public conscience is a fickle thing and five years later Hawkins' reports of the profits in the slave business so won the "best people" to the business that Queen Elizabeth entered with a subscription "for five hundred."

Bristol merchants became the leaders in this traffic and between 1680 and 1700 over three hundred thousand slaves were carried in their vessels to the

West Indies. In the eighteenth century Liverpool had eighty-seven ships under Mersey registry trading between the Guinea Coast, the British West Indies and Gulf ports. Liverpool merchants pleaded publicly that abolition of the slave trade would be the doom of that port. It had, they said, brought thirteen million pounds sterling to Liverpool in profits in ten years' trading. Someone wrote that, magnificent port as it was, its buildings were cemented in human blood. After 1807 the business subsided considerably, though free-lance trading continued. The agents on the Coast were a low and ruffianly type. Defying law and fever, maintaining harems, drinking deep, these men rarely lived to return to England, even occasionally fell victims to outbreaks of rebellion and the jealousy of the negro chiefs. It was the pleasing habit of these hyenas to set the chiefs at one another's throats in order that they might capture more blacks for export. Is it to be wondered at that sometimes their victims turned on them?

The courage beyond measure of the men—whether slavers, traders, clerks, explorers, soldiers, or doctors—who laid down their lives on the swampy hinterland of the great Moorish African principalities is unquestioned. The saving grace of that courage gleams through much that is sordid and brutalizing. The tribes they faced were jungle-bred, children of the forest and swamp, varied in type and in the main inclined to cannibalism. Far north their blood was

mixed with that of the Arabs and the most advanced of the tribesmen were Moslems. In colour they ran the gamut from light brown to black according to the admixture of Arab, Algerian or Portuguese blood with that of the original great tribes from the central plateaus of Africa. Savages, they responded best to the stern rule of the Moorish sheiks who were masters of the caravan routes. Children of nature, they lived by their prowess as hunters and fishers. Obeah, the magic exercised by reputed witch doctors, is their inheritance from both jungle and Moslem influence. It is related that while the British West India Regiment was in war service, the troops found, despite the fact that they were West Indian born and bred, that there were many things they had in common with Mohammedanism.

The word "obeah" denotes sorcery, fetichism. The forefathers of the present generation of black people were usually in terror of Ju-Ju—and of the death sentences which priests of the cult could pronounce. Among the isolated groups of people on the scattered islands of the Bahama chain this voodoo belief lingers still and finds practitioners. Severe penalties have curbed the possessors of the "powers of darkness," but occasional incidents reveal that the seemingly placid and contented servants in one's home may also be denizens of a kingdom of demons and demoniac power into which it is well-nigh impossible for a white man to intrude.

The obeah man uses queer nostrums and relies on weird concoctions and effects to gain a livelihood. Old medicine bottles often are filled with simple drugs bought for a penny or two, then are sold, of course, for shillings. Dogs' teeth, sharks' teeth, eggshells, snake bones, skulls of cats and other animals, earth from old graves, miniature coffins and chicken feathers are used to cure almost any disease or avert any possible disaster. Our magician deals in love by supplying philtres, in revenge by putting curses upon enemies, and in cash by being paid on the barrelhead, so to speak, before he goes to work. Sometimes a female of the species develops quite a business before landing in police hands.

The Bahamas received Africans from many tribes who were Moslem and had for centuries been under Moorish rule; Congo negroes who had the great swamp lands as their home; Ebos, who are the least intelligent of the African tribesmen; Mandingos, Nangobars, Fullahs and Haussas. These last three were fighting men of magnificent physique and unquestioned courage. Behind these people lay generations of aboriginal life—sometimes in semi-slavery or again under the rule of the Arabs. Behind the Haussas and the Fullahs there is a battle history that cannot be ignored. They had men with the gift of leadership; heroes around whom folklore and legend had grown. The Bahamian negroes of today are an intermixture of all these strains, so their physical pro-

portions are remarkably good. Here and there one can see families who are distinctly the inheritors of the Moorish blood. A deep copper tinge, aquiline noses, lithe and more athletic figures are their possessions.

The Bahamian African is quite a good fellow. He works well under direction and has, as a rule, an even temper and much physical strength. He suffers little from his diet. It is governed, of course, by his earnings which of recent years have gone from bad to worse. His living conditions, if he is anything of a farmer, are infinitely preferable to those of the folk in the western islands of Scotland. He does not endure ice, hail, snow, frost or cold. His rocky soil will grow almost everything one might care to eat. He has fruits in his allotment that are sought after as luxuries by well-to-do people in Northern and European lands. Corned beef is an extra he enjoys. He makes his own castor oil by boiling the beans in salt water until the oil settles. He will tell you that it is better—stronger. The more violent the reaction from mericine the better he thinks it is for him. It probably is.

When affluent our blackman enjoys dishes that are, to my personal knowledge, very tasty. A favourite is "fou-fou," which contains "okra" (a tropical vegetable), dried conch meat, dried fish and onions or shallots. It is a brew, a broth and a stew all in one. As a side dish into which he ladles a spoonful or so of the soup to flavour it, he likes "red meal," which is

maize—or corn—ground and boiled. As staples the Bahamian eats peas (pigeon variety), rice and salt pork; lard figures largely in his cooking. To make his dishes especially delectable he will add shredded coconut. "It's fillin', suh," said my informant—and I agree.

Benny cake, made from seeds and boiled sugar cane, is allowed to harden and is like a candied cereal. Guinea corn is ground in the handmill, sifted for husks and cooked as hominy is cooked in the Southern States. It is a side dish that goes with stewed fish and is "pepped up" by the addition of small green and red peppers made into a fish sauce.

In the island of Andros I found that the iguana, that ugly-looking little reptile, is skinned and stewed with tomatoes and Irish potatoes, when procurable. Served with peas and rice, it forms the best-liked meat dish. Governor's Harbour in Eleuthera boasts of a special Sunday morning breakfast that is enjoyed by nearly all "de cullud folks." It is baked in the outside ovens and is called "pork loaf"; it is composed of cassava-root-flour bread to which, in a condition of rolled dough, strips of pork are added. It is brown and crusty when ready for the table. Sweet potato bread is made the same way, and to this likewise strips of pork or mutton are sometimes added.

In Abaco and in Andros, where there are huge mangrove swamps, the shellfish known as a whelk is stewed like an oyster; then put into a chowder to

which tomatoes, onions and shallots contribute their juices. Silvertop berries, which grow on palm trees, are used for dessert together with pigeon plums.

Here's another tasty island dish: The box-fish, a triangular piscine, with a bony outer shell of quite lovely colouring, is cleaned and the meat removed. This meat is then mixed with bread, onions, or any vegetable available and is stuffed back into the shell of the fish and baked.

Of course, island chickens find their way to the pot and occasionally are joined by wild ducks or pigeons. That is about the list of the foods in everyday use. Add these delicacies: plantains, pineapples, melons, avocado pears, bananas, sapodillas, mangoes, coco plums, and star apples in season and you have the menu complete.

The native population is almost altogether engaged in either peasant occupations or fishing. The practitioners of this latter art catch turtles and hook sponges, besides netting or trapping table fish. Turtle meat is popular and sometimes plentiful; it sells from threepence a pound up. This diet many physicians declare to be inadequate. True, a great percentage of the people get only "fish and grits," for the very good reason that to get pork and flour one must have cash. Pellagra is the penalty for the insufficient diet.

Throughout the islands conditions of life vary, even with the Africans. In Andros, for instance, they are seemingly more self-reliant. Along its coast near

Mangrove Cay, where the great coconut forests stand, these people live in comfortable stone-built villages of whitewashed cottages. The wells are cared for and clean and the Commissioner, a Forsyth from Long Island, seems to be lending vigorous leadership to his settlements and getting results. His official staff is composed of a coloured doctor who is a jolly fellow and insisted that coconut milk and gin is the proper restorative after a rough passage in a small boat. The doctor has a Falstaffian appreciation of his lot and the cures he has to effect when pitted against the power of some obeah wizard who obsesses the patient's mind. The "bush doctor" still survives in the interior of the island, where there are large tracts of unexplored territory.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about all Bahamian blacks is their respect for law. The decency of their public behaviour is noticed by everyone. Their private moral relationships are their own affairs—and frequently the despair of the plentiful missionaries. Recent years, however, have produced a coloured intelligentsia whose influence and standards are being felt in this as well as in other ways.

"How do the negroes amuse themselves outside of Nassau?" an American once asked me. They have on the out islands "preachings," sing-songs and dances at the schoolhouse; and occasionally they sit around and sing to the beat of tom-toms. Now and again they murmur threats to put on the forbidden fire

dance. This reversion to racial instinct is forbidden, so it is indulged in only secretly.

"I want to take pictures of the fire dance, where can I have it arranged?" asked an up-and-coming moving-picture man of the Commandant of Police.

The reply was brief and the eye behind it very chilly. "At no time and no place in this colony; if that is what you are here for you had better leave quickly."

"Gee," murmured the disappointed one to me later in the day, "that Police Chief meant it; I could see that. You can't monkey with these guys." He had made a very accurate deduction and was, furthermore, going to abide by it.

The Government has an Industrial School in Nassau for orphaned lads, and for "bad boys." It is run excellently by an old Harrovian who is doing wonders in training capable and industrious groups of agriculturists. In the opinion of many, he points the best direction in which to train the bulk of the youthful population. The future for the rapidly growing population rests upon their ability to grow enough to live on.

A Scots agricultural director from Aberdeen University has created an experimental farm behind Fort Charlotte at Nassau, and is determining the best plants for cultivation in the pockets of earth that lie dotted among the coral rocks of the island. He felt, he said, that "In about ten years ye may see some-

thing done—but that job is nae likely to get results until the folk themsels wanted something better.” It was one of the dark days for an ordinarily optimistic Celt, I fear.

He was fighting great obstacles—the very slow acceptance of responsibility by peasant workers, their desire to sit about, and talk; to bask in wonderful sunshine and to let well or ill enough alone. The pangs of hunger would eventually supply motives, I felt. Good farm results obtained by those who, being foreminded, had already profited by their instructions would make for a better general receptivity, it seemed. “Aye—mebbe!—It’s too damned easy here; there’s nae a fight to getting the sort of living they can do wi’—but they’re listening now and some are doin’, so I should nae feel badly—I’ve only been out six months!”

A willingness to oblige is an outstanding characteristic of the African. “Suah, boss, suah,” he exclaims in almost any exigency—and ambles on. He has pleased you, that is quite sufficient for the day. He has reassured you that you have been right, he has done his part. “Bye, boss,” and he is on his way—and you on yours. What it was you made so much fuss about, he will forget. There are other things to do—he will get round to it—yes, tomorrow, or soon. Today he has a rendezvous “over de hill.” Perhaps bright eyes and seductive glances are waiting. Besides, has he not promised to go picnicking with a

truckload of the "church folks"? "Suah, boss, suah—I remembers."

The street scene in Nassau is often enlivened by the sight of a coloured man, all unconscious of the amused glances of strangers, threading his way through the throng with a billygoat on a short lead. If he has two he gets the road to himself. The animals grow excited at contact with automobiles, are set to prancing by the constant passing of strangers; but their leader is oblivious; his one thought is the market on lower Bay Street. He will be clad somewhat haphazardly—a shirt made up mostly of patches of variant colours—pants mended at knees and seat in differing shades. His hat may be a conch straw or anything he has acquired from a derby to a topper. His face will exhibit blank indifference and between his lips will be a short black "cutty" pipe. Once among his kind at the market you will see him change—grow animated—now he uses his hands to illustrate speech and he talks fast in a high-pitched voice. The goat will stay close to him and eat everything in sight, whether it be the wool on a sheep's back, or an old sack with the odour of meat upon it. His master's admonitions will be accompanied by a kick from a naked foot as gnarled and lumpy as an old tree trunk, whereat billy will bleat and prepare to butt—though he will settle down after a lunge or two.

The native women in the market sell most of the

farm produce. They are cajoling, persistent and active. They easily spot a stranger and have the usual bazaar faculty for a sudden rise in values based upon a presumption of ignorance on the part of the purchaser. "De white folks," if Bahamian, sniff and pass on. If from abroad, they are overcome by the "God bless you's" and the voices of the sirens of the fruit stands, so they pay exorbitant prices and say, "How charming all this is!"

A family domiciled in the islands for a season usually sends cook or houseboy to do the marketing—and how important this is as a source of perquisites is something no white "boss" ever learns completely. Certain it is that, as is common all over the world, the servant buyer will have "friends." Honest servants there are who scorn these grafting ways and are loyal to the master and the mistress, but the householder who would remain happy will concern himself with other things and remain oblivious to halfpenny and penny commissions in the kitchen.

Nassau possesses a domestic training centre, where, for very small sums, native boys and girls are taught cooking, house duties and table service. It does excellent work and in the last few years has greatly improved the quality of servants available. The school is headed by English and Scots women with certificates from the Domestic Schools in their respective countries. The wage question in the islands is usually resolved by the type of menage maintained. Modest

middle-class homes get cooks from twelve shillings a week, houseboys likewise; other servants from ten shillings a week. Some of the old Bahamian families still possess veteran servants of a régime that is passing; the arrangement seems to be feudal and provides clothes, food and care in place of any reward in cash. It is not likely a newcomer could achieve any such result during a visit.

Servants live at home mostly and few now have their quarters with the master or the mistress. The going-home hour—if one has a home on the roads leading to Grant's Town, the native quarter—furnishes unexpected and almost unbelievable insight into how one's dearest friends live. As these servitors of others pass along the road in earnest talk, one's eyes are opened by way of overhearing ears. "Massa he say" and "de missus she say"—and so on far into the night, as in twos and threes the black girls wend homewards, each with a bag containing the day's "takings and leavings." The white man or woman who thinks that the immobile black faces and servile "yassuh" and "yassum" cover a non-comprehending mind should live on one of these highways for a year and hear the table conversation of all and sundry broadcast along the road. The scandals these gossips feel a family concern in would "shock the neighbours if dey knew." The art of getting the "low-down" is highly valued in servant circles.

The usual thing for visitors to Nassau who desire

to study the native is to go "over the hill" to the "Holy Rollers'" service. It should be remembered that such a circus does not fit the temperament of the typical Nassau African and is the outburst of a particular sect only. It is also suspected of being quite a bit of a "show" put on to draw contributions from thrill-seeking strangers. The blacks themselves resent this spectacle; a large and growing majority now dignifiedly attends religious services held under the denominational auspices of the recognized churches. They take a respected part in the work such congregational responsibilities entail. They are as far removed in temperament from the shuddering exercises of the "Holy Rollers" as Canterbury Cathedral is in spirit from a corner mission. The negro love of music, of course, makes for hearty singing and for deep-toned, alert responses. Their attitude may be "copied" as to correctness of posture and decorous conduct—but the eye that can see far enough may vision a Saxon wight, uncouth and loutish, following his Roman conqueror in like imitation in an earlier day of the white man's being.

The problems attending the rise of intelligence and the growing economic security of the native are many. Patience with his own people will need to be the risen member's faculty. He has to remember the long road, the innumerable halts, the set-backs and the struggle, also that the majority of his people are

still sub-normal. His stride forward will overpass what seems to others a hopeless chasm. They are his people—his to hold and to lead lest they destroy the foundations of his new estate. They cannot but be what they are and in an island colony of circumscribed opportunities they must be helped to live, to survive and to master the first lessons of that painful and long-drawn-out process called evolution. The “Man with the Hoe” is its glory as well as its tragedy.

Someone deplored in my hearing that “the old life” was passing away. Quite likely. It is passing away in other places in the world. Even that citadel of peasant independence, Quebec, feels the fiery onslaught. The glens and lochsides of my boyhood, I am informed, are not “quite what they used to be.” The farmers of the north-west frontier of Canada, who in other days felt rewarded if they laboured and had a full cellar of salted meats and vegetables for the winter—they, too, are passing. So are cholera in epidemic form, typhoid, yellow fever and malaria.

The so-called sweetness of old remembered things saw many child bodies borne to early graves because of the simplicities of sanitation. The quaintness that is so charming to the woman who demands her food “machine processed and not touched by human hands” had to pass away if life was to be healthful and not menaced by the recurrent plagues of the tropics.

So while there may be a sigh of regret that the thatched cottage has given place to the shingled roof the yard and its primitive sanitary arrangements to the supervision of the sanitary inspector, they who live beside these things feel better for it. To see the black mammies attend a series of baby clinics in New Providence island, where a fresh-complexioned little Welsh woman chastens, explains and occasionally storms about some neglect, may not quite agree with the mind that seeks "the native under native conditions." But the clinic certainly protects the public health and ensures that the servants will be less likely to carry "little brudder's" disease into other circles. There is still plenty left of that Bahamian individuality which is unconquerable as to its speech, its outlook and its sunny responsiveness—not to add its irritating idiosyncrasies.

The African in the Bahamas has tried to show his respect for the motherland of the whites, a country whose subjects were the first in the western world to put him in bondage and whose government was first to set him free. The schools he attends have found it necessary to establish honour rolls in scholarships. Some there are who bear the coveted distinctions Oxford and Cambridge confer; others have degrees from great medical schools in Scotland and Canada. Those who have distinguished themselves at the bar are retained as counsel by both races. They present

a picture of decent conduct and patriotism. They speak of their fellow citizens with respect and they themselves, by reason of their attributes, are accorded it.

Their racial qualities and their willingness to respond to an Empire need are attested by the pictures in the Nassau Public Library of the several Bahamas Overseas Contingents 1914-1918. Their conduct in France, Egypt and Palestine has been commended: they won battle honours and decorations. Some, indeed, carry to this late day the stamp and carriage of their years in the service. Some there are who feel that the world still owes them something more than the after-care that was afforded them. In that they differ little from the men of other races who were soldiers for a brief spell.

Their parades I like to see. The instinct of the war-like Fullah and Haussa tribes of Africa crops out. The splendid carriage of bodies that drill and pride together have rendered handsome appeals to the fellow-feeling of a soldier. The Bahamas Police on the march are an example to any. Disciplined, self-respecting, and about as good combinations of civil officers and soldiers as one is likely to meet, they send the mind away back to the days when the picked warriors of the Congo delta and hinterland, led by Arab princes, carried the chain mail and glittering accoutrements of a Royal Guard and when such men

as Mungo Park and MacGregor Laing argued that they would make first-class native troops. They recall the thousand fights in which men of the intrepid Hausa Regiment have died for their trust in fine leaders and kept law and order. The qualities that are so marked in them as soldiers, are shown also in the black seamen bred in these waters.

Not a sea folk but an inland river people at their inception, these blacks sail the waters of the Bahamas as naturally as though it were their birthright. For generations of men that has been their vocation, yet back of that are the dark forest and the river lands of the jungle folk. Their qualities of courage were nourished in fierce tribal strife in African wilds—where victory was life, defeat death. Freedom they have had, yet are still learning to use. To make the best of it they must do voluntarily that which no man should be able to force another to do. They must work at a rate that even slavery never demanded of them, must use a steady mind and a controlled tongue. The road to freedom is no path for prattlers; for them, as for all others who came up before them, it is a veritable way of sorrows. It has rewards—and among the richest of them will be the new sense of responsibility.

Writing on the islands' pressing problems, Sir Harry H. Johnston, G.C.M.G., eminent geographer, summed up the results of an exhaustive study of the

origins of the negroids in the New World in this fashion:

"The rending of the veil which had shrouded the negro from the full gaze of the white man for thousands of years; the discovery of North Africa by the Arabs, the Portuguese, the Hollanders, the British, and French, forced the paleolithic or neolithic negro to gaze upon the full effulgence of the white man's civilization—the civilization of guns and gunpowder; of the cross, the mass, the translated Bible and hymnal; of schools, colleges, ships and wagons, distilled alcohol, roadways and telegraphs; of economic botany, modern rifles and artillery, canned foods and corrugated iron.

"The undoubted solution for the negro's difficulties throughout the world is for him to turn his strong arms and sturdy legs, his fine sight, subtle hearing, deft fingers and rapidly developed brain, to the making of money; money being indeed only transmuted intellect, and work only accumulated energy and courage."

One finds in the concluding paragraph the practical decisiveness of a Scottish Presbyterian, even if in the preamble to it there is noted the eloquence of the imaginative Celt. "The negro leaders," he concludes, "should devote themselves to studying disease, its prevention and cure, sanitary reform, chemistry, practical agriculture, sound building, modern history,

science, languages and religion and to teaching temperance in 'eating, drinking, love-making and public oratory.' " It is not too much to say that in the Bahamas such lessons have been learned and are being practised.

The musical instincts of these people find ample expression in songs of their own devising. Hum over—or sing—these folk tunes. Then you will feel the spirit of the native black—

"EVERY DAY BE SUNDAY"

Good mahnin' bretheren, how do you do?

Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by;

An' how are you, an' I am well,

Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by.

Crying, shine now;

Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by.

Come along, sister, don' get los',

Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by;

Jes' stretch your rod an' come across,

Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by.

Crying, shine now;

Ev'ry day be Sunday by and by.

I spoke to Moses on the sea,

Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by;

Jes' stretch your rod an' come across,
Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by.
Crying, shine now;
Ev'ry day be Sunday by and by.

I spoke to Peter on the sea,
Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by;
He left 'is net an' foller me,
Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by.
Crying, shine now;
Ev'ry day be Sunday by an' by.

“TURN BACK AN' PRAY”

Pray, leader, pray,
Why don't you pray?
Oh! the pretty bright star shall be your guide,
Turn back an' pray.

Go down to the fountain if you dry,
Turn back an' pray;
An' there you'll drink your full supply,
Turn back an' pray.

I was a mourner jes' like you,
Turn back an' pray;
Oh! didn't I mourn till I got through,
Turn back an' pray.

Oh! the tallest tree in Paradise,
Turn back an' pray;
Them Christians call it "Tree of Life,"
Turn back an' pray.

Hark! Hark! I heard 'im groan,
Turn back an' pray;
I heard 'im groan those pitiful groans,
Turn back an' pray.

"OH! WE ALL GOT RELIGION"

My fathe', where war you?
My fathe', where war you?
My fathe', where war you?
When my good Lawd was there?

My mothe', where war you?
My mothe', where war you?
My mothe', where war you?
When my good Lawd was there?

My brothe', where war you?
My brothe', where war you?
My brothe', where war you?
When my good Lawd was there?

You swearers, where war you?
You swearers, where war you?

You swearers, where war you?
When my good Lawd was there?

You drunkards, where war you?
You drunkards, where war you?
You drunkards, where war you?
When my good Lawd was there?

My mourners, where war you?
My mourners, where war you?
My mourners, where war you?
When my good Lawd was there?

My leaders, where war you?
My leaders, where war you?
My leaders, where war you?
When my good Lawd was there?

Chorus

Oh, the jin-i-wine religion
In that day, in that day, in that day;
Oh, the jin-i-wine religion in that day.
Wait on, the trumpet shall soun.

"MY JESUS LED ME TO THE ROCK"

My Jesus led me to the rock;
Oh my! Oh my!
I heard such a rumblin' in the sky,
'I tho't 'twas my Lord comin' down.

RIDE ON, JESUS

You see my fader? oh yes!
Tell 'im fo' me! oh yes!
I'll ride my horse on de battlefiel'
I'se gwine to go to heaven in de mawnin'.

Chorus

Ride on Jesus! Ride on Jesus!
Ride on conquering Jesus!
I'se gwine to go to heaven in de mawnin'.

COME OUT OF THE WILDERNESS

Brudder for yo's soul's sake,
Come out o' de wilderness,
Come out o' de wilderness,
Come out o' de wilderness,
Brudder for yo's soul's sake
Come out o' de wilderness
Talkin' about de Lawd.

Chorus

Been a long time talkin' about de Lawd!
Been a long time talkin' about de Lawd!
Been a long time talkin' about de Lawd!
Been a long time talkin' about de Lawd!

I'M ON ME JOURNEY HOME

De talles' tree in Paradise—
I'm on me jerney 'ome!
De Christian call it de tree ob life—
I'm on me jerney 'ome.

LORD REMEMBER ME

De win' blow east—
De win' blow west—
It blow like jedgment day.

Chorus

Oh Sinners you'd better pray
Do Lawd remember me!
Do Lawd remember me!
Do Lawd remember me!

MARY WANTS—

Mary don't want no peas, no rice, no coconut oil—
Mary don't want no peas, no rice, no coconut oil—
Mary don't want no gin 'cause it makes her sin—
All she wants is brandy handy all the while.

Chapter Five

ELEUTHERIANS ALL!

*"Where spans the deep blue vault of heaven—
Star spangled, flashing gold,
Where sings the sea her old sweet song
The tale is never old."*

THE lure of the Indies and the call of the Caribbean Seas were felt so strongly in the marts and counting houses in London's old Cheapside in 1647 that William Sayles, a former Governor of Bermuda, was readily able to gather a group of influential merchants and form The Company of Eleutherian Adventurers. Its objects were exploitation and settlement and the Parliament of that day readily passed an act giving it the right of Proprietorship over not only the island we know as Eleuthera, but over what are now known as Harbour Island and Spanish Wells.

This William Sayles was a promotive individual who had been concerned in the affairs of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina and six of their Lordships were interested in this new charter. These were the Duke of Albemarle, Lord Craven, Lord Berkeley, Lord Ashley, Sir Peter Colleton and Sir George Carteret. The scheme partook of a stock promotion and

the prospectus read that persons who qualified by reason of "Godliness, Justice and Sobriety"—and could invest one hundred pounds—would be received as members. The Company was not to admit more than one hundred persons. Upon settling, the investor would receive three hundred acres for himself, his heirs and successors. Later, upon proving his worth, he was to receive a further two thousand acres. During this testing period other islands would be brought into the scheme; also every servant after he had completed his engagement would be allotted twenty-five acres. As an additional incitement to industry, and perhaps cupidity, agents were to be appointed who would apportion profits between the Adventurers and the Proprietors as they arose from wrecks, gold, silver, copper, brass or lead mines, ambergris, salt and lumber.

Furthermore, the colonists were to have a say in the management of their domestic affairs. A Senate of one hundred was to be elected; they were to choose their own executive officers, but the Proprietors would select the first Council and Governor. This was merely to initiate the scheme; thereafter the Senators would elect their own Council and Governor annually.

So in 1649 arrived William Sayles, bringing two clergymen of the Church of England and one hundred independents who, it seems, had been ordered to leave the Colony of Bermuda because of their

nonconformity and who now sought to find a settlement where their religious freedom would be protected. Bermudian comment of an official character at this time characterizes these worthy folk "as enemies of ye Keinges Company and Country." This stigma was enjoyed in the reign of Charles by many who resisted ecclesiastical pretensions yet were in no wise guilty of offences under civil law.

These adventurers must have been a sturdy lot, for not a few survived the hardships consequent upon their settlement, and in 1680, thirty years after, notwithstanding the sacking of the island meantime by the Spaniards, many continued obstinately to hold to their acres. Others who met with the full force of the invader's wrath had to be succoured by friends in the early New England colonies and were assisted in reaching Boston and Portland, Maine. The island had its share of exciting and perilous years when piracy reigned and lawlessness endangered the fortunes of the survivors. A close relationship with the fortunes of Nassau and its leaders, official and mercantile, is apparent in the records of Eleuthera.

Of historic significance is the fact that the colony today finds the arcanum of its present rights and privileges as a self-governing body in the constitutional privilege of representative government first given in the charter to the Eleutherians. All the way from that day of tremendous hopes to this there has

clung to this island a spirit different from that of its neighbours.

On Eleuthera the arts of agriculture have been stimulated doubtless by the nature of the island. It has such an extent and variety of semi-northern landscapes that the reproduction of an English countryside seems easily within the powers of the pioneer. Eleutherian towns and villages are very attractive and are, as a rule, situated on rising hillsides or in sheltered coves which add to their picturesque simplicity. The first sight of Governor's Harbour from the dock front is pleasing and the terraced homes above the little church in the foreground are made the lovelier by the palm groves and the wooded aspect of the roadway. The old town is on a promontory at which the mail boat lands; it rejoices in the enticing name of Cupid's Cay. A connecting causeway leads to the new town and visitors have remarked its likeness to Gibraltar in its relation to the mainland.

Governor's Harbour is reputed to have been Sayles' headquarters and the capital of his colony of adventurers. There would have been no causeway then, only the sheltered inlet; and it is possible that the recalcitrant Bermudians glimpsed their future home from where the mail boat docks. It is permissible to assume that they would have been ferried to the mainland or at low tide would have walked ashore. Picturing the Quakerish maids of the day and the burdensome nature of their sober garb, it may be as-

sumed that a desire to avoid puddles and an impulse to display an otherwise shrouded and shapely ankle brought rebukes from grim matrons and caused young men's eyes to drop. "A Quaker wench for wilyness and a starched hood for coyness" did not originate in the days of the Merry Monarch out of the contemplation of the Testaments.

The island roadways stretch its entire length and automobiles are common. The journey northwards from Governor's Harbour is over a series of rolling hills, by inland lakes sheltered from the sea, skirting headlands that give delightful vistas and through areas where luscious crops of tomatoes are grown. The scene looking down into Gregory Town, or The Cove as it is now commonly called, reminds one of a Gaspé village—with the addition of sheltering palms and the ever-changing beauty of the harbour waters.

An interesting modern counterpart of the settlement of the first Company of Adventurers is the story of the settlement at Hatched Bay, where for several years after the Great War a group of ex-officers of the British Army and Navy endeavoured to re-create in part the dream of their forefathers in 1647. They built a village along the lines of a Hudson Bay Company post; it had a moving-picture theatre, a waterworks, an electric farm and a garage. A harbour was also created at great expense. But this little company was unfortunately obliged to cease operations, thus concluding another phase in the

grand tradition of Eleutherian Adventurers. In colonization and operation the experiment cost some thirty thousand pounds, all subscribed and paid by patriotic Englishmen at home. Its suspension left the bulk of the money in the colony and for years the settlement contributed greatly to the prosperity of the near neighbours.

The pineapple industry, which had been introduced into the colony by some German Palatinate settlers, thrived on Eleuthera at one time and old inhabitants will tell you of the great three-masted ships that used to ride at anchor off Governor's Harbour, loading "millions" of pines for English or American ports. The revival of this industry under a peasant ownership plan has been encouraged and here and there in deep holes the plantings are taking root and shaping towards production. A negro told me that his "pappy and mammy" used to have gold and silver in their money box in the years of the pineapple crops and that when the industry failed they had had enough money to settle the family in Key West, Florida, where he had been born. They must have been thrifty folk because when fortune's favours ceased in Key West they were able to repatriate themselves to the Bahamas. Nowadays, tomatoes, bananas, pineapples, oranges and corn are raised for local and foreign consumption.

Historic names appear in the roll of Eleutherian settlements—Glenelg is named after an early Secre-

tary of State for the Colonies, and Wemyss's Bight has the same name as a bay on the island of Arran in Scotland—though there the similarity ceases. The bight is the place of settlement of an old Scotsman who blessed his offspring with the land at his death. A decent veil of Presbyterian reticence covers the enumeration of how many they were, or just what gratitude they display to his memory. Perhaps it is that he practised the stern Calvinistic doctrine that deeds, not words, are required to create communities.

Bannerman Town is named after another but less prolific Scot, Sir Alexander Bannerman, who in 1854 was Governor of the colony. Other quaint settlements, often near the ruins of old plantation homes, are Rock Sound, Tarpum Bay, Savannah Sound, Palmetto Point and James' Cistern. Many descendants of the original settlers are still in Eleuthera, members of the Culmers, Watkins and Griffins clans. It is a long day since their progenitors arrived and the varied fortunes of the colony have scattered groups of them not only over the islands but in the United States and England.

The island homes and gardens seem to partake of a desire to enrich the green and leafy setting in which they are placed. Each hamlet today has roadways and neat fences, and paint and whitewash have not been spared in adding to their beauty. The Atlantic rolling in on the northern and eastern shores brings with

it salty bracing winds that give vigour to human effort.

In early October the crisp morning air tempts the traveller who has known the joys of the trail to don a rucksack and hike over roads that wind by dune and headland. By such an enterprise he may enjoy the cool lakes, resembling tarns on a Devon moor, that shelter behind the rolling crest line of the eastern shore. One result of such saunterings will be the discovery that many of the lakes are being used as turtle "farms." Where in other lands and scenes a fish rising or a duck placidly resting in the water would be his only companionship, here the plumping into the waters of alarmed turtles keeps him company.

The scene has not escaped the poet and the words of H. C. Christie, the bard of the Bahamas, are worth quoting in an endeavour to interpret to the reader the Eleutherian scene:

*"An emerald gem bound daintily
In a circling rim of sapphire sea;
Within a polished casket set,
Perfumed with mint and mignonette,
With golden clasps
And golden hasps
And lined with lapis lazuli."*

This gifted man has left many verses for the delight of those who, tongue-tied in the midst of

beauty, would turn a page or so of his verse and find the lyric and the ode that has the essence of Bahamian glamour. His *Blackbeard* deserves to be used at large as an example of the Homeric tradition and there comes to memory a still evening when the sunset flamed over the track between Cotton Hole and Bottom Harbour and a Harvard professor, temporarily absent from his schoolrooms, recited quatrain after quatrain, glorying in their sentiment and keenly savouring their cadences and refrains. It is essential to know Christie if one is to get the spirit of the past or to sense the old colony. He is the Robert Burns of its folk rhymes and he keeps company with Bliss Carman and Richard Le Gallienne in the anthologies of the Caribbees. This sweet singer has passed on but his contributions are deathless and a lover of poetry will find his collected and printed verse a good companion and a gracious mentor to journey with.

A naturalist would never weary in the Eleutherian scene. All sorts of plants and wild flowers seem to have taken root in the woods or may be found in old ruins, peeping out with gay abandon to greet the knowing ones who come to seek them.

Since 1703 when Thomas Walker, a Chief Justice famous for the severe sentences he passed on pirates, landed, these flowers and plants have been studied by a succession of specialists. Back in 1725 one Mark Catesby, helped by the bounty of Sir Hans Sloane,

came over from England and spent enough time on the flora of the islands to enable him to write two comprehensive volumes on the subject. The Emperor of Austria in 1783, doubtless after perusing the works of Catesby, sent Professor Franz Maeter. Then France took a hand and André Michaux, in 1789, collected and recorded some eight hundred specimens.

These three were the pioneers of a large company of naturalists, some of whom are still at work. There are collections of Bahamian plants in museums in London, New York, Copenhagen, Vienna, Paris and elsewhere. The list of those who have visited not only Eleuthera but other islands includes the Northrops, the Brittons, and Millspaugh from England. The very latest studies and exhibits are those of Dr. Waldo Miner of the Museum of Natural History, New York. All these writers are represented by books that are easily available in libraries.

The fields and old plantations of Eleuthera reveal possibly the greatest variety of fruits and flowers. The islands as a whole contain about nine hundred fifty flowering plants and it is assumed that these must have been concentrated here largely by winds and birds or by the tides sweeping past from Cuba and Florida.

Among the plants and trees introduced by successive waves of settlers from other lands are sugar cane, orange, lime, lemon and citron. Experimenting agriculturists brought in yams from Africa, shaddock

(grapefruit) and hibiscus from China, mangoes from India and breadfruit and bananas from Jamaica. Some of these have been growing here since 1700. Guinea grass and corn came from West Africa, royal palms from Indian, poincianas from Madagascar, bamboo from Hispaniola, jasmine from the East Indies, and bougainvillæa from Brazil.

Avocado pear trees came from Cuba or Jamaica, but their original home is on the mainland of South America. Exposure to salt winds on the eastern shores of Eleuthera militates against plant growth there, but on the western hillsides and in the little valley they are all to be seen, growing wild or flourishing in cultivated areas near settlers' homes. It is no wonder Eleuthera has won the name of "Emerald Isle." Generations of men, settlers and slaves, have toiled to make it so. The flora on Eleuthera gets special display: the island's roads give access to all points and most visitors drive by motor car the whole length of the island.

Perhaps the most common question these newcomers are called on to answer is, "Have you tasted paw-paw? It's the greatest digestive in the world." Following an example set by Mary Kingsley, pioneer woman traveller in West Africa, I early learned to anticipate this query by outdoing the questioner. "Paw-paw," said I, "was excellent in Eleuthera and I could digest anything if I ate it for breakfast or lunch."

A Major George Benson, who was at Hatchet Bay, told me it was quite true that a junior purser on an African coaster sat down to a late supper of a huge paw-paw, and that as he did not appear at his state-room later the purser hunted for him. He found only his boots and watch chain slowly following the rest of him inside the paw-paw rind! The wily fruit had taken advantage of one of his absent-minded moments and, after overcoming his assimilating powers, had digested him. This gentle humorist told me other things of a like character which may not boast of the same authenticity. So I spent a pleasant afternoon.

This island for generations enjoyed commercial leadership in the Bahamas due to its thriving plantations. Its picturesque history lacks the dagger and pistol touch of other sections; but to a northerner out of the hinterlands of Ontario there is a kinship here which is instantly recognized.

HARBOUR ISLAND AND SPANISH WELLS

These two islands are particularly the homes of those whose forefathers went with Colonel Andrew Deveaux. Ill-armed and untrained, officered by men who had had no field experience in war, they followed Deveaux unhesitatingly in the 1783 attack on the Spaniards in Nassau. For that reason (and need there be another?) the hearts of men will warm to them. Of all those who through the long years par-

anticipated in the strife, bloodshed and murder that marked the history of the colony, it remained for the few brave hearts who followed Deveaux best to deserve the guerdon of "the red and gold of courage." It is likely, too, that the concluding stanza of a poem that celebrates this Relief of Nassau is apt when it recites that "he displays courage best who looks in the face of failure and does the best he can." Thus it gently recalls the fact that the Deveaux expedition did not begin in a vein of optimism—even though it closed in a pæan of glory.

Dunmore Town is the centre of both past and present for small Harbour Island. Its homes terrace themselves up a hillside amid casuarinas and waving palms. Barracks Hill and Gun Point below still show mementoes of the day when a garrison held the two and when Lord Dunmore made it his summer home.

The town is a miniature Nassau and besides possesses one of the finest ocean beaches in the colony. Here the sand is pink with coral and very fine. And the great coconut groves through which one passes on the way to the beach furnish resting-places that are fascinating to the traveller who for the first time exchanges his northern woods for the deep glades of these top-tufted trees.

Off the beach there is an old-world inn where the native dishes are cooked in genuine Bahamian fashion, that is, without the foreign sauces so commonly

employed elsewhere. It is quaint, odd, restful and utterly unsophisticated.

The good folk of Harbour Island have a touch of enterprise, because ice is obtainable from a privately owned plant and ice cream is served on certain days of the week. Electric light is used in many homes here. So a visit here was doubly pleasurable as a change after iceless days elsewhere.

The island's charm has drawn residents from far and wide. The American who built a winter home here must have wanted peace and a measure of solitude. Are not the white-and-blue cottages and the stone buildings assembled in an array that suggests a village on the Ægean Sea? Was it because of that fact that this city chap who settled down amidst Dunmore Town's calm found here the peace that a harried soul hankers for? The hardy inhabitants of Harbour Island enjoy "commonage" on the opposite Eleutherian shores, the right having been given to them in 1784 as a reward for the men who fought beside the hero of the "Relief of Nassau." So morning and night you see their sail-boats, white-hulled and graceful, cleaving the waters swiftly and carrying the farmer-sailor folk to and from fields and homes.

This island had its day of passing prosperity. A friend tells me that her mother, on arriving there many years ago from England, was astonished to see on the rafters of a native woman's kitchen a

plenitude of hooks—enough indeed for a well-stocked larder of smoked hams and meats. Also she noticed specimens of what was obviously ships' furniture and commented upon it. The reply was touched with pathos and regret—"Yes, mam, we was well off; but, mam, you come at a bad time to us—the wrackin' [wrecking] days is over."

The channel round the north end of Eleuthera from Current Point to Gun Point was always dangerous for sailing vessels and many who misread a shore beacon, or were careless, came to grief. On such occasions the menfolk of the place would sally forth upon their errand of "rescue." Thus it comes that one sees ships' doors used on dwellings and cabin woodwork decorating places of public meeting. So can one understand the rafters thick with hooks and the regret in the voice of the good lady who had seen the passing of "the good days."

A resourceful lot, these Harbour Islanders, and perhaps in their fathers' days a little conscienceless about "the trade." However, one can always recall the unselfishness of that handful who on one occasion at least recalled that "a patriot's God particularly Thou art."

"What did you do at Harbour Island?" was the question put to me by a city friend who himself travels with a valet and a cocktail shaker. "I sailed and bathed in the sea, ate lots of conch chowder and every kind of fruit there was. I yarned with

men who, like the men I had known on Canadian lakes, were handy with rope, tiller or saw. Likewise they could build a boat or raise a roof with the best of my frontier friends. Many tales they told me of men who had 'gone away' and so had made names for themselves in Nassau and in America. I saw a tall slim Englishman lead a parade and learned that it was in his own welcome and that he was the youthful Governor of the colony. I had tea in a lovely home where the 'King of the Island' lives—the Commissioner. Also, taking seriously the advice given by a man with a three bottle nose, I swallowed gallons of coconut milk for my stomach's sake (or was it my kidneys?).” He sighed and said, “It sounds nice—and you look as if it did you good.”

A story of the wrecking days was told here. It seems that a congregation of islanders was engaged in worship when a call was heard outside: “A wreck! A wreck!” The worshippers started up as one man. The pastor, caught in the midst of a prayer, broke off hastily and cried out. “Now then wait, let's start fair!” And all left together, leader and follower, as one.

A stay at Harbour Island can be full of entertainment. I harkened to what these lusty lads as the Robertses, the Pinders, Munroes, Alburys, Johnsons, and Currys said about bringing more visitors to their island home. A young American who went there for a short stay last year came back to Nassau with en-

thusiasm boiling over: "It's the only place I ever stayed where, instead of my having to say, 'How much to go sailing?' they came round to tell me to be ready to go out. They took me along on sailing or fishing trips—and what I contributed wouldn't have paid for the gasoline." This was good to hear, yet, should too many visitors come to stay, such a camaraderie would have to be curbed; or again it might not, because in the islands men must fish if families are to eat. So, if a stranger be an agreeable chap in the narrow confines of a boat—well, he might still be asked to go along—share and share alike.

The Spanish Wells settlement adjacent to Harbour Island was in the thick of events from the beginnings of buccaneering down even to the War of 1812. In that conflict an American vessel sought to pay off a score against George III by plundering the place and setting it on fire. This did not daunt the islanders—though it might well have done so. They built anew. If you want a good skipper for a fishing smack and you say so in Nassau, you will in all likelihood be told "Cap'n So-and-so is the man, he from Spanish Wells."

These Spanish Wells sailormen are the descendants of generations of seamen. Many a thrill have they given me as their schooners crested rough seas or carried full sails when I was praying for harbours to run into or for the safety of quiet waters. On such an occasion an ancient mariner regaled me with his

experience on a voyage to the "Florida Cays" where with "my own h'eyes I saw a mermaid astern of the wessel." He looked a respectable old fellow. I was assured of his piety, so must needs accept his testimony. An American underwater picture man out-classed him by telling how he had used a crowbar to prod sharks out of their coral lairs in order to get "action pictures." The statement was undisputed but his call for volunteers for a look around under water in what he described as "a nesting place of 'em" went unanswered. It becomes easier, one finds in this day of miracles on every side, to accept as facts statements from research departments, even though they be beyond our understanding.

As far as most of us are concerned, however, sharks continue definitely outside the pale of companionship, either at sea or around these Isles of June.

Speaking of mermaids brings me naturally to fishing in the Bahamas and the delights of the day's catch. Some there are, and their number is growing, who prefer the ways of the fishing camps at Whale Cay and Bimini. But my most enjoyable fishing has been done from boats—in company with the aforesaid mariners of Harbour Island and Spanish Wells.

"Fancy fishin'" (with a rod) these men regard with varied emotions. Trapping in fish-pots, netting, and fishing by hand line they understand, and I would be the last to debate about it when the choice lies between fish fresh caught or "bully beef" and

peas and rice for a meal. Even if to be certain of fish means that the methods of the professional fisherman must be used.

Catches cannot be said to cover the awe-inspiring list of fish that fills pages 122 to 136 of the *Bahamas Handbook*, but I had a 321-pound kingfish and a 20-pound rockfish and a 40-pound shark to my credit. All taken by "fancy fishing." Twice tarpon were on my line; as for the balance, only fish exceeding two pounds can be remembered. They included mackerel, rockfish, muttonfish, snapper, bonefish and a yellowjack. All were lovely things, beautiful of colouring and their last minutes left me sad. Only in the case of the shark did the "quality of mercy" fail to drop "as a gentle rain from heaven."

The inhabitants of this group, despite the channels separating their three islands, feel that they are "Eleutherians all." For generations these families have supplied leaders in the colony's life. The business accounts of two centuries record their names in every type of career possible for men of vision. Today, in changed circumstances, the islanders are clinging to their homes, awaiting the next era of opportunity.

Chapter Six

MEN OF THE NORTH—ABACO—GRAND BAHAMA—THE BERRY ISLANDS

*"Never was sea so little and never was isle so lone—
But over the scud and the palm tree the English flag
has flown!"*

ABACO men are the men of the north in the Bahamas. They are mostly Irishmen of Ulster stock who, being Loyalists, came out of New York in 1783 and settled on the seven hundred seventy-six square miles of this island. An Irishman requires a great deal of land if he is to settle down comfortably; also a deal of effort is required to move him to any other spot once he has settled anywhere.

So Abaco is the Bahamas' Province of Ulster and Hope Town, the capital, is little Belfast. It has a foster-mother in Eleuthera, whence many families of early settlers moved on to Abaco. Here is a land filled with Malones, Russells, and Robertses, who in turn are filled with a willingness to acknowledge their nativity before the world and to compare their people with those of "the backward out-islands of the Bahamas."

I do not affirm that all Abaco men are of Irish

extraction; perhaps it only seems so. Certainly one leader among them—and one I count a friend—terminates each social occasion with a few verses of "My Wild Irish Rose" and has trained all others from his countryside to follow him, or else be accused of lacking the proper home spirit.

Sir Guy Carleton when in command in New York at the end of the American Revolution must have seen the necessity of moving along the Scoto-Hibernians then resident in that city. Had they remained in the new states, there to contest the subsequent political activities of their fellow nationals from the south of Ireland, the world might never have known Boss Croker nor heard of Tammany Hall. New York City might, in such event, have been divided up into "free boroughs"; a grim Ulsterman as Mayor would not have cut capers on the Battery wall for movie newsmen to record. But if fourteen hundred fifty-eight settlers who left New York for Abaco were to become the backbone of a new colony and not the stalwarts of a metropolis on the Hudson, so much the better for the Bahamas.

When the Commissary General of the British Forces in New York, Brook Watson, shipped these people to the Bahamas he gave them six months' provisions and appointed a Boston Loyalist, Philip Dumaresq, to accompany them and issue the rations. I have hunted about for any record of how the Bostonian performed this task and what was the con-

dition of his mind after so doing. I find only that he stayed hereabout nearly eighteen months, so I take it that he was well received and pleased the majority. He wrote letters home regarding the lack of fresh meat and remarked that the year of his stay had been very dry—so dry, indeed, that root vegetables were burned up under their thin top layer of soil. He noted wild grapes and suggested a winery as a needed measure for the future. The drouth conditions did not deter him from remarking that guinea corn, turnips, yams and potatoes would grow very well and that poultry would thrive; and furthermore that “the climate was delightful.”

The Loyalists received no welcome from the Harbour Islanders settled on Abaco. These men had been without competition and the trade of wrecking needed more ships, not more plunderers. And so one group sniffed at the other upon occasion and used such epithets as “blackguards” for the old group and “Micks” for the new arrivals. However, the question could be settled only one way, and that was by absorption. So today there are no differences about how families came to Abaco; rather are all voices raised (and sometimes to a high pitch) to assert Abaco’s claim to having the best sponging and turtling fishermen in the colony, the best lumberjacks in the world and, by the large, the most liberal supporters of the Methodist Church in Nassau. It is rare indeed to hear a Conch dispute with one of these

Abaco men, so overawed are other out-islanders in their presence!

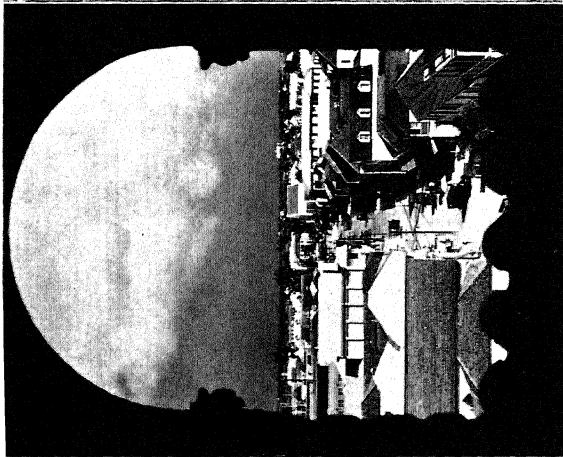
Of course, these men I speak of are the Hope Town folk. Farther north there are quieter clans in the regions around Green Turtle Cay. They are the men of the "farthest north" and, like their fellows in Hope Town, form a splendid group of sea-going citizens. Their little town shows groups of charming cottages nestling in a sheltered nook with a low range of hills behind them. History breathes in its very name—New Plymouth Town. The ancestors of these people left the pioneering mainland colonies to remake the aborigine-haunted Bahamas into a pleasant place in which to dwell. A visual memory of these men will be a lasting one for me—old men, youths and boys striving together to clear the debris of a great storm from their streets. Amid plenty of chaffing they demonstrated a community spirit that a new city of the prairies might have envied. The weakest were being helped first, and the aged were doing what enfeebled hands could best do to help, by baking and gardening. That same was true in spirit of Green Turtle Cay and Cherokee Sound. They were teaming together as only the Irish of Ulster can team when some tremendous necessity has cancelled their individualism.

I like the beauty of Hope Town, with its snug waters and the striped column of the lighthouse showing on Elbow Reef across the harbour. The kind-

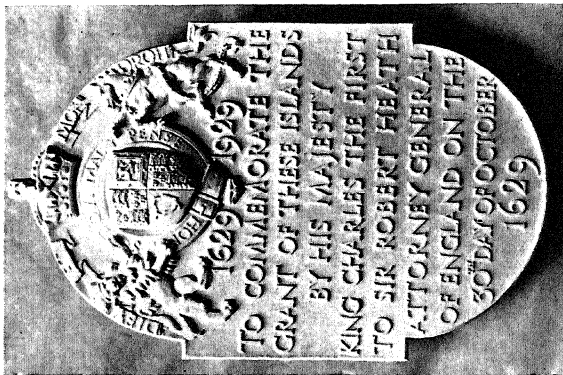
ness of the people on the hillsides round that rarely lovely spot is pleasant to remember. This Abaco is a "white man's country," as they say. It is, as a rule, the coolest island of the Bahamas at any time of the year and every so often I yearn to accept the invitation of the unofficial Mayor of Green Turtle Cay, Captain Roberts, to board his little ship "and come home with us." In so doing I would not dare to pass Hope Town unvisited. Does not my friend Russell, the Commissioner, hold there in trust an old trench knife that is a relic of one adventure we shared?

It would be difficult indeed to go by and not revisit another Roberts at Marsh Harbour, not to stop off at Man o' War Cay or drop into Cherokee Sound. Each place is a picture of sturdy cleanliness and orderly living. And each brings to mind memories of fishing and shooting trips that resemble nothing quite so much as life in my own northland where another breed of Ulstermen built New Ontario.

Abaco resembles Northern America—with eight months fall weather every year. The island has had, too, some agricultural development after the northern fashion that its fellows to the south have lacked. An American, Dolley, spent years there upon sisal cultivation and his plantations were a good example of thrifty husbandry. For a confirmed eater of vegetables this is heaven—here one can get the types of Irish potatoes, the cabbages, turnips and carrots that have the rich juicy flavours of home. The Irish



Bay Street is the principal business thoroughfare in Nassau.



This plaque commemorates Charles I's grant made over three hundred years ago.

have not lost the art of farming by transplantation, nor can I say that they have lost either their fiery vigour or their eagerness to ensure that you agree with their viewpoint.

"Abaco is the best island in the Bahamas!" To hear it for the first time means only that you are talking to an Abaco man; to visit there is to learn to say quick and decisively, "Yes, that's right!" Or else qualify as one who cannot see beyond his nose. These families came to the islands later than the settlers around New Providence and the pioneers had a bitter struggle to obtain a foothold. The early settlers here never experienced the easy-come-easy-go fortunes that folk of the southerly islands knew; therefore, they are people who hold definitely to realities and to principles.

One thing notable on Abaco is the best timber I have seen south of the Carolinas. Huge forests of pitch pine, in which great trunks tower up to the skies, good areas of dogwood, madeira, horseflesh, buttonwood, ironwood, and cedar. It is as refreshing as the dawn in Canada's Laurentian Mountains to wake up here and draw into one's lungs deep draughts of the ozone-laden air. Timber operations at Millville fill the sunshine with resinous odours that instantly recall the camps where, instead of the jeans of the Bahamian coloured labourer, mackinaw coats and "woollies" were the "rig of the day."

On the western shore is the Bluff, a settlement of

coloured spongers. The people here offer a complete contrast to almost all the other natives of the islands and they have also acquired many of the sturdy qualities of the people with whom they traffic daily. On landing in St. Johns, Newfoundland, a visitor once remarked that a negro greeted him in a rich Irish brogue. That was the obvious result of propinquity; at the Bluff, though the brogue is absent, the expressions used are distinctly flavoured with Hibernian idioms.

I visited in this area for a week and saw wild boar in the woods, duck in the swamps and, in addition, a husky coloured man called MacKenzie who could dive and swim and walk about underwater like a turtle. On one occasion he went overboard and caught fish with his hands in order to save time and hasten a meal. Perhaps this sounds impossible, yet anyone who cares to make a trip to the fishing grounds can have it demonstrated by obtaining MacKenzie as a guide.

Those who spend their time in denouncing certain Peace Treaty conditions made in Paris in 1918 can compare that document with an earlier document made in 1783 and also called the Treaty of Versailles. This resulted in an interesting exercise of self-determination by certain British Loyalists who had fled to Florida during and after the Revolution. Spain lost Florida by the Versailles Treaty, whereupon some fourteen hundred men, women and children

crossed to the Bahamas under Lieut. Col. William Brown of the East Florida Rangers. Many of these were men who had served in British Carolinian regiments, and were now, of course, under a penalty if they returned to their homes. They were only too glad to have the Crown give forty acres to each head of a family and twenty acres to every other person, black or white. Rental terms were established for some of these lands, though the Loyalist refugees were exempted from payments for ten years from the date of the grant. The Abacos received quite a proportion of these expatriates.

To visit Abaco is easy, a fast and comfortable motor ship, the *Priscilla*, making the run to all the settlements mentioned. Arranging for shooting or fishing trips or for wild boar hunts is within the province of the Commissioner for each Abaco district.

Abaco is a strange amalgam of near-tropical and temperate lands, palm and pine, vegetables like those of the States, pineapples of peculiar lusciousness. The island's fisherfolk have been bred to utter self-reliance, but this does not affect the stranger or cause him to feel that his visit is an intrusion. Here each little port seems in itself an epitome of the makings of an empire. One finds material for folk stories as rich as Barrie's "Thrums", stories of men who are grimly hanging on to what seems to many to be a

forlorn hope—the prospect of some new future rich in rewards.

Under the Abaconian waters lie great beds of coral rocks, their crevices filled with beautiful ocean flora that are marvellous to behold. Here are queer-shaped growths insects have slowly builded; plants and sea stars of gold and crimson; great antler-like horns and empurpled fans swaying gently in the tidal flow. Overhead the sun of the Isles of June; on shore the forest-clad ranges and in the gardens old English flowers! No wonder they love it so—these “men of the north” who call themselves Abaconians.

GRAND BAHAMA AND THE BERRY ISLANDS

Grand Bahama has been a sort of lost child of the colony and only in the 1880's did it begin to attract any permanent settlement. Intermittently it has had lumber operations, for the last few years its dusky inhabitants have been engaged in fishing, turtling and sponging. Travelling up Hawksbill Creek among the mangroves is a picturesque adventure, but getting ashore thereabouts has its difficulties.

In town I met a little man whose pockets were as full of blue prints as his head was of plans.

“Palm Beach sixty miles away—liquor cheap here—only twenty minutes by aeroplane; how about building a Casino and drawing the Palm Beachers who wish for real exclusiveness?”

Well, how about it? I could not say. The place seemed to possess the great advantage of being near to the home of the plutocrat—with only a stream between, so to speak. I heard from time to time tales of Baron this, or Count that, of the Duke of Hither-and-Yon and the Honourable Whoosit, yet it seemed evident that no money was available. So Palm Beach still exists without its would-be competitor.

What my promoter friend is doing now I do not know. He had some sort of title to a handsome island—if nothing else. The place has loveliness, charm, and all the characteristic features of the Bahamian sub-tropic scene.

No matter how gloomy the promoter's day may be there is always a bright spot somewhere. I found one at West End, where were moored a fleet of grey, low-hulled motor-engined cruisers and some half dozen aeroplanes. Nearby an old Cambridge graduate dealt in the stuff that made "Pussyfoot" Johnson a hero. Here was a spot to tie to, good food, ice, fresh meat, the very best of wines; and for companionship, the world's latest company of the "lost legion." The mangrove bush furnished excellent shooting and just offshore one found the best of fishing. A world outside the usual world of men, where the conversation was about air trips that paid—or concerned the best engined planes, the fastest marine engines. Englishmen and Americans vied with each other in boosting their respective motors and wings.

There were, of course, gaps in the conversation: "Big Nick" or "Red" had been "copped" and "sent down" for a "stretch." There was the tale of the bootlegger who had towed a coastguard cutter through a dirty sea and had the ship safely inside Miami bar, only to be held up by the man he had saved. This Samaritan was "sent down" for seven years, so the story ran. The liquor we drank was liqueur Scotch of a kind the connoisseurs in my Montreal club took as cannily as if it were an old brandy. With these men it was "In the sky today and in the pen tomorrow, but there's a kick to it." That was the expression of an ex-squadron leader of the R. A. F. who had come in the day before with his wings riddled with bullets that had followed him as he made a "get-away" from the Everglades back of Miami. Another three trips and he would quit and go back to Canada; he had had enough. Many nationalities were represented in this collection of game bird-men who so recently had been heroes in a war.

The liquor stocks at this port of missing men represented hundreds of thousands of dollars; to guard them the British law provided one Commissioner and one native policeman. Outside the harbour was a pitching and heaving thirty-footer with a gun forward and a big number on her hull plates; representative of the other side's idea of maintaining law and order. Tossing about in a small dinghy near her and jollyng her exasperated crew was a "Conchie Joe,"

fishing for food as well as for the information which replies to his sallies might contain. Of course, the cutter was inside territorial waters but she was "under way," so there was no breach of international relations. Unless perchance one counts "Conchie Joe's" farewell to the visitor: "'Bye, you sons of Beelzebub (or something like it)! Come again."

The answer from the revenue cutter was so fiery that the propeller shaft almost developed a hot bearing. The descendant of the buccaneers thumbed a stumpy salute from his nose; so too, his ancestors may have behaved in the days of blockade running into Wilmington.

Some day it is said a great tale concerning these goings-on will be written by an elegant young gentleman of the colony who left school suddenly ten years ago to enter the "coastwise trade."

THE BERRY ISLANDS

On Great Stirrup's Cay, Berry Islands, there is a finely planned city that is in embryo and in ruins at one and the same time. Called Williamstown, it is named for the worthy King William IV. Its dreaming builders envisaged a Customs House; was not this port to be a trading post for traffic to Florida? Yet today few have heard of the place and most trips to "the Berrys" are made for the fishing. If it is to be luxurious fishing, one hauls up at Whale

Cay, lives in a lodge by night and fishes by day. If one be in haste, he can reach Williamstown by the Bahamas Air Service; if time serves he can travel by the mail boat, usually by the *Sir Charles Orr* when on its Miami run. Sometimes a few sportsmen travel from Nassau to Green Cay, where the pigeons and plovers cluster, and have a day or so with the guns. The Berry Islands are well wooded and possess rich soil that will grow anything that will crop elsewhere in the islands. However, my search was for history, and of this there was little.

"Looking for history, are you?" asked a short sharp-faced young American. "Well, I'll tell you some. You know Gorda Cay?"

"Yes, I know it—just south of More's Island!"

"Well," he continued, "I was looking for treasure there for two weeks. You know the yarn about the old galleon sunk there and the gold coins they say are always drifting ashore? Well, I went down in a headpiece diving kit and there isn't anything to get! I used a crowbar for exploring underwater and my only reward was a bad half hour with a barracuda. Oh, yes, there must have been a wreck there, but it's used up, or covered up. Somebody tells me that the guns outside of Government House came from there. Mebbe they did, but there isn't even a cannonball visible now.

"I'm done with Bahamas treasure hunts under the sea—the barracudas are too darn inquisitive. Say, do

you think anybody would pay me for a story about it? No? Well, I'll have to go on with the job I'm here for—and get underwater pictures.”

This discouraged me from further investigation—so far as Gorda Cay was concerned. Yet there is a place where the stones bear markings; also there is a man with a bit of an old chart roughly drawn. And there is an old skipper who has the secret. So some day—well, I'm going to see for myself just what it is all about!

Oh, yes! this is a red-hot trail. We all hear of them, but few of us have actually struck one; that is, recently. You cannot live around the Bahamas without having one treasure hunt and it is just possible that you will go on two or three—because Blackbeard's blackbirds certainly laid away golden eggs. All awaiting a spade to hatch them out.

There was an old man, who used to go to the bank in Nassau every week or so for years and weigh in some golden doubloons. Efforts to get at the secret of his hoard were fruitless. Before he died he told of having been driven ashore away to the south, in the Caicos group, and of finding a built-in doorway of stone. This he demolished, thus revealing that it led to a cave. He swore that by the light of his improvised torch the interior chamber seemed an “Aladdin's pallis.” He rolled two or three stone jars toward the entrance, then became scared when his torch burned down. So he again passed through the

doorway. This time he built it up again and buried it in debris. He said he kept the secret from his two black boys and he swore that the treasure "was still there," though he could not identify the island on the map. The things that best witness to his story are the facts that he lived for years devoted to evangelical religion and never worked. That he used to get cash at the old Bank of Nassau for doubloons from his secret store is well attested.

Down south on Fortune Island one hears of a fairly recent incident; of a strange vessel that stayed about for weeks, kept at bay too-curious natives, and departed one night in a hurry, leaving a big hole in the ground and some small debris. Evidently these pieces were remnants of an iron box the sailors had burst open. The commissioner, warned of this activity, arrived a day too late; then became the amused witness of a great expenditure of energy on the part of the natives. So active were their spades, he averred, that they would have remade the island's history agriculturally had some fertilizer and seed been applied to the turned-over soil. After a week of tremendous interest this turmoil ceased as suddenly as it had erupted; men returned to their leisurely days ashore and to some turtling between.

The cays of the Berry reefs skirt the Northwest Providence Channel and long were a rendezvous for wreckers. In an appendix to the Blue Book of 1864

is the following with regard to wrecking as a business:

"It has been mentioned that two-fifths of the imports during the last few years consist of goods saved from vessels wrecked within the Colony. The number of these is large, owing to the vast trade which passes through, or near, these most dangerous coasts, fringed as they are with shoals and bristling with cays and rocks where not only strong and shifting currents, but sudden and violent gales expose even the conscientious and wary navigator to unexpected dangers and difficulties. Innumerable localities and opportunities offer temptation also to dishonest shipmasters wilfully to cast away their vessels for the purpose of defrauding the underwriters or of obtaining by secret arrangement with the wreckers a share in the salvage.

"The frequency of these occurrences, and the rich prizes sometimes obtained by the wreckers, have led to a large number of the inhabitants in some of the islands devoting themselves principally to the occupation of wrecking. They either cruise about those places where wrecks most frequently occur or stand ready to rush off as soon as they hear of a vessel stranded, or in danger of stranding.

"This procedure has had the necessary and usual effect of demoralizing the persons engaged, of diverting their attention from agriculture or any other industrial pursuit and of exposing them to the trials

and temptations of alternate abundance and want. Also it has accustomed them to rejoice in misfortunes which bring calamity and ruin to others. At the same time it cannot be denied that many lives and much property are saved through their instrumentality; that large numbers of intrepid and hardy seamen are reared up. Also that a large income is legitimately derived by the colonists from this source, which, however undesirable, it may be, is incidental to their geographical position.

"Both the number and the value of wrecks has been considerably reduced by the erection of light-houses and by the Civil War in the United States. Likewise the number of licensed vessels and men has been greatly reduced. In 1858 there were licensed:

Vessels	302
Men	2,679
"In 1865,	
Vessels	176
Men	712"

The history of the wreckers' home communities has been one long story of continuous Biblical wrangling, mostly quarrels about verses of Holy Writ. These things helped in producing a race of preachers who lent to their interpretations of obscure passages all the vigour of untrained and uninformed imaginations. These partisan quarrels became acute in the

periods of the wreckers' enforced idleness. At these times an outsider would be astonished to see with what perfect equanimity these followers of a notorious business would "wrestle" with the Lord in prayer and "seek His bountiful mercy for the continued prosperity of His faithful servants."

Perhaps the wreckers were not exceptional in this matter of righteousness. Is it not true that many men and most nations are ready to assume that their side in a dispute is "the Lord's side"? Such beliefs can bolster up a "racket" or direct public passions toward a war.

The descendants of the wreckers are notable church-goers and both Protestant and Roman Catholic missions seem to thrive in the Bahamas. On fishing schooners and trading vessels I have listened for hours as men argued about their individual angles of approach to the Infinite. This is, of course, a sign that cultural life is cramped for other expression. The libraries on the out-islands contain many meaty tomes of the Victorian age and these match closely the desires and needs of old-fashioned folk. There is this to be said for the life here: it is at least quite wholesome, even if stilted. Days that start at "sun-up" and close with a short eventide leave little time for a tired man or woman to speculate on philosophy. And to live beside a sea that in late summer is liable to be swept by terrific storms originating far down in the

Caribbean scarcely encourages excursions into the realms of philosophic doubt.

God, as these people conceive Him, is near, His hand holds the bridle of the storm, His children must shelter within His arms lest they perish. Like all who dwell by the great waters and go down to the sea in ships from island homes, whether in bleak Labrador or in warm Bahamas, these children of the tempest must feel that there is a safe harbour. Their vision of the Most High may not accord with that of a tired outside world "grown sick of half-men and their little tales, and dreary," still it is the rock of their faith. To it, unless all hope be abandoned, they must cling. Theirs is the essence in its simplicity of that prayer—"Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet. Lest we forget, lest we forget!" and by its power they taste "dominion over palm and pine."

Chapter Seven

MYSTERY AND BEAUTY—ANDROS AND EXUMA CAYS

*"Before him, like a blood-red flag,
The bright flamingoes flew;
From morn till night he followed their flight
O'er plains where the tamarind grew."*

—Longfellow

THE Spaniards called Andros, largest of the Bahamas, *Isla del Espiritu Santo*—the Island of the Holy Spirit. Its present name is taken perhaps from Sir Edmund Andros, Commander of the Forces in Barbados in 1672, or perchance from the fact that upon the ceding of the island of St. Andro on the African Mosquito Coast to Spain the inhabitants were given Andros to settle upon. Certainly it has an atmosphere and character totally different from its sisters in the Bahamas group. Over one hundred miles long and almost forty miles in width, it boasts of sixteen hundred square miles of territory, part of which has not yet been surveyed. The population includes the most primitive of the African inhabitants of the colony, and save for missionaries and officials of the colony, only one white man abides there. The "bush" blacks

are regarded as the dullest and most backward of their kind and have the least contact with modern life.

Andros received its first recorded settlement in 1787 when seventy men of British origin received huge grants of land. A historian relates "that twenty-two white heads of families, seven planters and 132 slaves cleared over 800 acres of land in one year." It evidently at one time had an aboriginal population, whether Carib or Lucayan is not known. In the caverns back of Mangrove Cay were found a canoe and paddles which undoubtedly antedated even the discovery of the islands by the Spaniards. Skulls and some weapons, stone axes and pottery have from time to time been unearthed; a legend persists of an Indian tribe in the vast swamp lands. Superstition, obeah, folk tales and a suspicion of witchcraft are its spiritual attributes.

The visitor here is faced by an almost complete absence of roads, miles of impenetrable bush. In the eerie stillness of its forests one encounters occasionally a thatched native hut, primitively furnished, to which frightened little children scamper in alarm at the approach of the white man.

The Andros man of the forest and swamp looks at you with a dull and lack-lustre eye. You note the absence of welcome, a trait that solitary aboriginal types usually display. While he offers neither harm nor comment, he seems to intimate that to him at

least you mean less than nothing. He does not seek gifts, nor borrow tobacco; at your departure he raises his hand in a gesture of good-bye as though any business you may have had with him actually held no interest for him. He works his patch of corn and vegetables, is a deft shot with a bow and arrow. When seeking fish he uses a long "grain"—a slim spear with a barb. He is quite unlike his fellows on the coast-line who are spongers and have a laughing daredeviltry about them.

This huge island is divided into three portions by waterways called the Bights, North, Middle and South. What happy hunting-grounds the lands and waters create. Two hundred species of birds are found ashore while that King of the Fighting Fish, the tarpon, is plentiful in the deeps. That naturalist who brings camera and notebook will find here the quiet and peace he requires for studying intimately the fauna of the colony; in addition his explorations may readily lead him into sanctuaries where the disturbing crack of a gunshot is rarely heard. Thrushes, warblers, creepers, swallows, finches, starlings, fly-catchers, humming birds, goat suckers, kingfishers, woodpeckers, owls, pigeons, oyster-catchers, snipe, spoonbills, herons, ducks (ten varieties), gannets, pelicans, gulls, petrels in profusion, visit about the creeks or sing in the woodland trails.

The Flamingo Preserve under the direction of E. W. Forsyth, Warden of Andros, is, of course, the

place par excellence for bird fanciers. The colonies of these birds at Grassy Creek are at certain seasons a rare sight. The Spaniards, by the way, would not eat the flesh of the flamingo, reverencing it because when in flight this bird has the aspect of a cross. To-day's inhabitants have no such scruples, so rigid penalties must needs be enforced against anyone interfering with these birds. The Southern Bight is a combination of sea and stream which, like many other waterways in Andros, meanders canal-like between square-edged banks of coral. It is the only road to the interior; boats of shallow draft can navigate it for a long distance inland. For days an explorer will be quite alone in this district—for sheer solitude no other place could better endear itself to the lover of the wilds. The Commissioner has arranged to have competent pilots and guides for this region available; no one should be unwise enough to venture across Andros without two requisites—a good guide and a flat-bottomed punt with an outboard motor. In the Museum of Natural History in New York there is a model of a "flamingo city" made as a result of a study of these birds in their Andros setting.

One of the Commissioner's native pilots will in himself be a reward as well as a safeguard to any party he joins. That is, after he fully understands the strangers' mission and their manners. His yarns about "chin charnies" in the trees and the "curse of the Chamberlains" are vivid outgrowths of the dark

superstitions the African mind has retained in isolated Andros.

Here, at the close of a gorgeous June sunset on the Southern Bight, our bodies relaxed after a mighty fight with tarpon. We breathed avidly of air cooled by sweet zephyrs from the Gulf Stream. Then the voice of the guide came to us in quaint accents, offering an old tale. It was an ancient folk story and it would be impossible to reproduce it correctly as to accent and the peculiarities of native speech and idiom. The banjo player had laid aside his instrument and the prelude of all good "ole stories" was heard:

"Once upon a time, a very good time
Monkey chew tobacco an' 'e spit white lime—"

The story goes on: "Once there was a man, an he had a field 'pon a different part of this shore. Dis day he wanted to go to his field and he met a shark. De man he say, 'Please, Mr. Shark, you carry me across to dis field?' And de shark say, 'All right, I carry you 'cross,' and he carried him over.

"When dey gets 'cross he give the shark a good cut and de shark say, 'All right.' Bye and bye he come out from the field and he meet the shark again, and he say, 'Carry me 'cross once mo,' and the shark he carry 'im 'cross agin and he give the shark another big cut and the shark he say, 'All right.'

"Next day de man he want go 'cross agin, he say, 'Shark, please carry me over and I give you big for-

tune.' De shark he carry him agin and all he get was such a big cut that he lie awake all the time till the man come out agin. De sun was down when the man come out, he say, 'Shark, please carry me 'cross again to that sho'—when I get 'cross I pay you.' And the shark he say, 'Get on my back, man.'

"The first fish he meet was a cub (pup shark) and de shark he say, 'Cub, you do man good he do you harm!' De cub he say, 'What you must do ter 'im, cut him in two.'

"Next fish he done meet was a porpy (porpoise). De shark say, 'Porpy, you do man good he do you harm, what you must do ter 'im?' De Porpy say, 'Leave it to Gawd!'

"The next fish he meet was a barracuda. Shark he say, 'Barracuda, you do man good he do you harm, what you mus' do ter 'im?' Barracuda he say, 'Cut 'e eyes out!'

"The shark 'e come near sho' and 'e see a rabby (rabbit) on de rock and 'e say, 'Rabby, you do man good 'e do you harm, what you must do ter 'im?' And the rabby 'e say, 'Come in lil' funder I ain't hearin' you.' The shark 'e come in a bit funder and 'e say 'I can't come no funder else I get on sho!' Then the shark ask him again and de rabby say, 'Why, let him jump on sho!' And before de shark could go de man jump on de rocks and de shark swim away crying."

Set down, it sounds simple and of very little in-



This soldier of the British West Indies
regiment won the D.C.M.



A typical native of the Bahamas, this
old woman has served many years as a
sponge worker.

terest. But how different when heard in its jungle scene, with moonlight sparkling on the negro's solemn face, the night stirring quietly with sounds of water lapping and of insects in the woods! Yes, so heard from the lips of the child of the forest whose ways are those of the primitives, it is absorbing.

Many of the other yarns, so an old Africander who has lived on the island tells me, resemble Kaffir camp-fire legends. Always they illustrate a good or a bad side of human nature and resemble the fables that we as youngsters used to listen to at bedtime. The fact that no blacks have come fresh from Africa for a generation or so has, of course, cut these people off from the original sources of their folk lore. No longer do they possess the background of tribal experience, nor are their ancestral languages preserved. These things will, I am afraid, soon disappear.

Some of the black inhabitants along the coast are very fearsome about venturing inland in the stretch of back country behind Coakley Town. They believe that "sperits" of harmful intent abide in that feared territory. Therefore, outside some of their huts you will find, tied to trees, a variety of bottles and pans containing charms to ward off evil beings.

One difference from Florida is quickly noticeable. There are no alligators in the swamps; the thing nearest to them is the little iguana. Our guide caught two, skinned them, rubbed them with salt, stewed them with half a can of tomatoes—plus okra and

sweet potatoes. And so made for himself a satisfying meal. Not one member of our party took even a sip of the potful—despite the fact that all of us had watched its preparation with deepest curiosity. The incident fully convinced the guide that “white folks ain’t wise ’bout everything.”

In the shallows of the creek we ran into a school of fish, whereupon this versatile fellow perched himself over a sea-runway and demonstrated how, by the swift employment of a bow and arrow, he could secure a good grouper for supper. The fish was made into chowder, and since we lacked sherry, a spot of rum was added in its place—with the peppers. This “bush chowder” contained thyme for flavour, peppers for heat, a can of whole carrots, two onions, and several pounds of potatoes and hard tack. It simmered for over an hour and furnished a delicious mess. To confess truth, however, it is far better to use sherry than rum. Only hardy men such as have West Indian insides—reputedly porcelain-lined with copper tubing and kidneys of zinc—should use rum as a food flavour. Even under these favourable conditions there exists no guaranty that internal resistance will outlast the allotted span of three score years and ten!

The settlements on this semi-barbaric coast are interesting and at Mangrove Cay the vast coconut groves provide an endless supply of cooling drinks. Armies of land crabs also helped supply our cuisine, the boat captain treated us to stuffed crabs for sup-

per. One who is resourceful can easily live off this island. Raccoon came to our table and was called "rabbit." And it had the same outline, even if it was of a slightly more gamy flavour. The reason for such experimentation was that I hold it to be a principle that stores and supplies are properly a reserve; that one should be able ordinarily to live off a country—if it be a country worth living in. Had a choice to be made of a squatters' paradise, then Andros, of all the Bahamian islands, would deserve selection.

The Androsian is a fellow of parts who spends most of his time on the great sponge beds on the west coast known as The Mud. Now and again when at home he fills up on cheap rum and makes the settlement feel his presence. Then it behooves officialdom to lock him up. Sobered in time, he goes back to sea, not only with resignation but with alacrity—he has had his "binge." The villages here furnish a field for study in the primitive arts of getting along with almost nothing. Certainly the modern conveniences that are considered absolutely necessary by even simple communities elsewhere are entirely lacking here. There may be an over-supply of missionary activity—if one may judge the people's ability to maintain churches by their earning powers. It is, of course, but natural that people should desire rallying places for their social existence and the Christian faiths have not been backward in providing them.

It was the speculative member of our group who

said: "Take the Union Jack off that flagpole, remove the Commissioner and the missions, and in ten years this place would be like the heart of the Congo country. These fellows could live where the city blacks would starve and, out of sight of supervision, would revert quickly."

Possibly it is true. Living thus remote from the progressive capital, the Androsians are content with such resources as the sea and land have blessed them with. It is not a content that has any tinge of regret, but a whole-hearted and happy appreciation of opportunities which to us seem extremely limited, but which give them a place in the sun, shelter and ample food. All in return for a minimum of effort.

Andros guards herself behind barriers of reefs that cannot be penetrated save by seamen who know the waters; there are practically no channels for vessels, with a draught of more than eight feet. Once inside the reefs one finds good anchorage and deep water. The same is true of all three towns—Kemp's, Coakley and Nicolls. A visit to all of these convinced me that the coastline's beauty repays the effort that is required in approaching it. Also that the prospects inside the reefs are such as will rejoice the man of rod and gun. The traffic here moves by sea or by saddle through an unspoiled scene that has not been messed up by "dude" tourists. I found reports of typhoid were pure fakes; investigation proved that

malarial mosquitoes are unknown. Wells here are clean and covered and, despite the elementary nature of sanitation there was good policing even in settlements in which I am sure a dollar is rarely seen.

In the beginning I remarked that the feeling and the atmosphere of Andros are different from those of any other island in the Bahamas. To appreciate the truth of this statement one must needs know them all, tasting of each its fascinations for the historian and also its opportunities for sport. Then, too, one must be interested in observing how men and women whose fathers came up from slavery have risen to independence. It is a "bushman's" land, a happy hunting-ground for a chosen few who delight in obscure scenes and life without frills.

One day there drew alongside our small schooner a lug-sail dinghy. Sitting on the thwart was a white man with a splendidly muscular body; the grace of an athlete marked him, lithe muscles rippled under a tanned skin. His face was hawk-like and marked with deep lines. When he came aboard his story, told with the nasal Anglicisms of the "Aussie-digger," was a strange one.

"Beachcombing and building a boat," was his answer to the primal question. "Been here five years now! You remember my name? Yes, I used to be a world champion; toured Europe and America, and I guess I saw all there was to see, ate everything there

was to eat, drank everything there was to drink and spent two fortunes. So I'm here now—getting along fine, acting as a guide, living like a bushman on next to nothing. Got my guns, my rods, nets and enough canned grub to give me a change in diet—and here I'm squatting—”

“Coming out soon?” I asked.

“Na’aw, why should I? There isn’t anything to come out for that I haven’t had.” He looked a young fifty, was blasé about the civilizations he had known and was out of them for good.

No man excepting the Warden knew so much of the island; he had been everywhere and as a guide he showed most intelligent woodcraft. He had the rare faculty in a white man of being a good tracker—one who could read a bird’s or an animal’s trail by leaves or twigs disturbed on the ground. He knew life—from the diggings near Coolgardie through to the purlieus of New York, he had—like Kipling’s son of the army—“’ad ’is pick o’ the sweethearts and ranged and roved in ’is time!” But in his case the end was not “settlin’ and thinkin’ an’ dreamin’ hell fires to see,” but rather the raw life of the beach-comber with a reversion to the type of some Aryan forbear who hunted and fished and lived by the steppes of the Caspian Sea.

Everything our visitor caught beyond immediate needs was cured by drying it in the sun; he ranged

the bights as a Lincolnshire fen master might cover his county. Each trophy of his gun or spear added to the stores drying in the "smoke" house beside his palmetto hut. There was no picture of a woman on his rude dressing table, no pictorial records of his past exploits; nothing to tell of the chasm he crossed when he entered Andros to be a "forgotten man."

This chap's reminiscences suggested one vital reason for the life he had chosen. A man he was without a doubt, courageous, kind, and possessed of the recklessness that marked all his kin in the Australian Light Horse—that corps which Sir Philip Gibbs has written so well of in *Now It Can Be Told*.

These men from "down under" differed from all other Britishers in their war conduct and psychology. They went into action with the élan of revengeful spirits; once out of the line they indulged in orgies that were a "let down" for desperate temperaments. From Acha Baba to Beaumont Hamel the likes of this member of the "lost legion" left undying records for bravery.

"They have no discipline," was a staff officer's comment on them to me.

"Quite, sir, none—only that of self-reliance and respect for themselves. And—with all its faults—that wins when they have a leader like Monash, who knows them."

"I admit it, but damn it! they have no discipline

—and,” this with a chuckle, “speaking of that, you Canadians resemble them!”

THE EXUMA CAYS

*“With the flying fish before her and the white wake
running aft—*

*Her smoke wreath hanging idle without breeze
enough for draft,*

*She will travel fair and steady and in the afternoon
Run down the floating palm tops where live the
Isles of June.”*

—Bliss Carman

We pass from Andros with its untarnished natural setting to the beauties of the Exuma chain, where, amid the islands one comes upon the historic charm associated with the dwellings of ripe old families. We discover aristocratic names, trace the post-Revolutionary antecedents of the Earl of Dunmore and Lords Rolle and Wright. George Town was projected as a capital for the colony; Rolle Town, Steventon, and Rolleville were ambitiously laid out as cities, with fine avenues and good roads between settlements. The setting remains, but the great homes are in crumbling ruins and only documents in public libraries and archives testify to what has gone before. Rare attractions surround the little town; rolling hills

and grassy plains, herds of cattle, droves of live stock, turkey gobblers in the yards. All these speak of constructive leadership and good husbandry. The little mail schooner arrives deep-laden with supplies when inward bound; outward bound for Nassau she is like an agricultural fair gone to sea—cattle, sheep, poultry and ponies are exhibited in friendly proximity.

The people here are alert, anxious to have you see everything and to convince you that Great Exuma needs only more immigration to go ahead. Already the leaders are laying plans to capture the colony's beef and mutton trade and to be the purveyors of saddle stock. A campaign is on to see that the people of New Providence "eat Exuma turkeys and no other" at Christmas.

This chain always has had a generous tradition of giving. As illustration, Lord Rolle left his estates by deed to his slaves when the Abolition Act should go into effect. One of the far-sighted leaders now deceased said to me years ago: "Exuma needs only new men and new capital plus blooded stock for its herds. Then there will be a livelihood for hundreds in supplying the colony with food." The fact that some years later the "blooded" stock was being introduced shows that these descendants of the Loyalists listened to him to some effect.

Recommended as late as 1792 as providing a safer harbour than Nassau's and a better protected site

for the colony's capital, Exuma has not today abandoned the rich ambitions of those gentlemen from the Carolinas who settled thickly here in 1783 and left, as one Lieut. D'Arcy (of the Engineers) said, "scarcely an acre of land that was uncultivated or not in use."

Studying these islanders one sees that men of Exuma still hold deeply rooted the ideas of the pioneers who founded its towns and the road system. Any one of the inhabitants who possesses a stake in the community is easily led to talk of what may be done. What a contrast here to the folk among whom I had last travelled, a contrast for which there was no preparation save the enthusiasm of the mail vessel's master and the talk of crops and markets some mulatto passengers indulged in. Unexpectedly I had, in laying in a store of tobaccos in Nassau, discovered another Friend of Exuma. One who, when he heard of my travelling intentions, gave me sound advice:

"You will find there the best-worked farms in the colony and the loveliest scenery!" All of this I noted with reserve; my reply was notably discreet. Fresh in memory was the look "Abaconians" had given me when I had failed to say "Yes, yes!" quickly in response to their mild boastings. So I was, if anything, timid of the Exuma scene; perhaps the Irish from Abaco had descended upon it one day and had imparted to it their own vociferous loyalty.

A certain courtliness of manner does linger here beside an acute consciousness of their island's superiority. And this last rests on the solidest of foundations. To describe the cays is far beyond the pen of a mere journeying observer—such gems they are of vegetation, palms and sheltered bays.

"Oh!" said a thrilled young thing from Park Avenue. "What a place for love with the right man!"

The males coughed, shuffled and hemmed and hawed a bit, but it was a "Forty-niner" with a bulge amidships who accepted the challenge. "Yeh, birdie—with me?" The gaze that enraptured was feasting on the greens and blues of the shores as we coasted by Little Farmer's Cay and past Pimlico, Allan, and the Brigantine Cays to Great Exuma, never left their beauty, yet a silvery voice tinkled sweetly in reply: "Big boy, you are too full grown—I want romance, not a diet-sheet daddy!"

Our stout passenger gazed mournfully at his bay-window extension, was bleak and disconsolate for hours. The sweet young thing, oblivious, continued her ecstasies as the journey proceeded. Justifiable they were, for it seemed as though some divine hand had sprinkled the south shore with the rocks and islands of the Hesperides. Each island with a character all its own, each with a camp site where trees would bower your shelter. Every island seemed to merit such words as Bliss Carman wrote:—

*"There is the endless sunlight, within the surf's low
sound*

*Peace tarries for a lifetime at doorways unrenowned,
And a velvet air goes breathing across the sea-girt
land*

*Till the sense begins to waken and the soul to under-
stand."*

Nearly sixty miles the Exumas are spread, a crescent of glamorous delicacy. And sweet winds that are perfumed by a mysterious fragrance play over them.

On Great Exuma you come into contact with actual remnants of the life of the early settlers of slave times. For the most part the domestic arts show that little has been changed since the days of the Carolinas and Virginia. By respecting the simplicities of the people and gaining their confidence you may be rewarded with the sight of cut glass, early cabinet work and bric-a-brac brought by the Loyalists from the old American Colonies. Hand-tooled iron work can still be obtained from craftsmen who work the metal in old forges where rude things are musically turned into beauty. Old churches that are passing into decay still have the wooden locks on their doors; in the cemeteries you will see fences of hand-tooled scrollwork in hardwood that go back more than a hundred years yet still stand up sturdily to the elements. Where today you see a village, there once stood a thriving seaport. The keels of the clipper

freighters of the heyday of Boston and Nantucket have come to rest at the quaysides.

"Sixty thousand acres of romance!" was the estimate of a statistician on holiday among these islands. He was right. Here French privateer and British guardship have fought offshore; close by an Island Militia Company stood guard over the guns of Georgetown Fort when Bonaparte threatened England's overseas possessions. These places remember, too, the day when from every look-out deck anxious eyes were strained for sight of Spanish ships o' war.

The traditions from out of which Exuma rose to its present state fell into obscurity with the economic failures that followed the abolition of slavery and failures of the sisal and cotton crops. The natives, struggling quite apart from those who have created a renaissance of the field life are like all others of their kind who dwell in remote villages; nothing seems to affect the joint faith that where the settlements are there is a new future.

To sail away after imbibing of the rare vintage distilled from this alchemy of heaven and sea that so encompasses the Exumas is to feel a haunting sense as of the cessation of music which had borne one aloft beyond the realms of being.

The cotton estates were always characterized by some degree of isolation; but, to quote the venerable

lady who was kind enough to receive me and talk of holidays she spent as a little girl on her grandfather's estate, "planters lived like lords." Their tables bore the best of beef, plantation-reared fine island mutton, wild duck, turkey, chicken, plover, pigeon, fresh pork and fish in abundance. Bananas, oranges, grapefruit, plantains, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, avocado pears, sugar plums were there. An abundance of servants, sixty slaves, a baby a year for each woman in the slave quarters and the proprietor monarch of all he surveyed.

The slaves had their quarters in palmetto huts, some owned beds of woven mats, others slept on the floors. Their wells were shallow and they scooped up their drinking supply by stooping from steps that ran down into the water. They used basins for dishes and employed broad leaves for ceremonial service when visitors appeared. These servitors received a pint of corn daily and ground it for themselves after finishing the field labor. They cooked this outside the kitchens on open fires. Three stones held their pots. After supper came rest. Often a fiddler played and the blacks danced until nine o'clock. "And then to bed."

"These folk were simple, happy and contented," said my friend. "They got food even if the crops failed. They were allowed one pig to each family and some chickens. When these were sold they got

one-third the price in cash or goods. The men wore blue denim and the women white and check cottons. We saw that they were cared for when ill, and I think they were as well off as the majority of the blacks are today when no one takes care of them. Of course, it could not go on indefinitely, at least I suppose not. When slavery was abolished the cotton planters were finished. It was a good life, but very lonely for my own family because we were far away from the others."

A native of these islands told me some of the folk tales—and I append two here—

"DE MAN AN' DE DOG"

Now dis day it was one man. 'E had a sour-sop tree, 'e didn't use to let no people know. He wife an' he chillun' could hardly get anything to eat. Every mornin' dat man use't to go from his house to dat tree to eat his breakfast.

Now de woman say, "Wonde' why my husnan' does get git he ev'ryt'ing to eat." She get one bag o' ashes. She say, "My husnan', come 'ere an' lemme fix yer shirt!" Den she tied de bag o' ashes on he back. When de man was goin' to dat tree de ashes did drop out. He went to 'e sour-sop tree; he eat as much 's 'e want den 'e come away. We'en 'e come home de woman say, "My husnan', come 'ere; lemme

fix your shirt again." Den she take de bag ashes off 'im.

Hafter dat woman went dere to de sour-sop tree; she pull ev'ry one clean; only leave one. De man say, "My soul! somebody been here, take all my sour-sop!" De man climb up in de tree. He take one stick; he reach up to dat limb an' try to get a sour-sop down, an' he couldn't get it.

He see B'sheep; he say, "B'sheep, get dis sour-sop fur me; I'll give you half." B'sheep say, "No, I want all!"

He see B'tiger. De man say, "B'tiger, get dis sour-sop fur me I'll give you half." B'tiger say, "No, I want all!"

He see B'lion. He say, "B'lion, git dis sour-sop fur me; I'll give you half." B'lion say, "No, I want all!" Den he see B'dog; he say, "B'dog!" B'dog say, "Hey!" He say, "Get dis sour-sop fur me; I give you half." B'dog say, "All right!" B'dog ketch it. Soon's 'e git 'im, so, he start off runnin'; him an' de dog. De dog fine de man was catchin' him up so he bury right up in the sand.

Now de dog jus' leave he two heyes out; when he get dere de man say, "Oh my de san got eyes!" De man went tell the people de san' got eyes. He gone call all de people. When all of dem come dey look, dey say "Oh yes de san' got eyes fur true!" Wen de man dig, when he fine out dat was de same dog, he ketch him and he squeeze him dead.

B'RABBY HAD A MOTHER

*"Once upon a time, a very good time
De monkey chew tobacco an' 'e spit white lime."*

B'Rabby had a mother; father was dead; de times was very hard; he didn't know what to do for a living. B'Rabby said to his mother, "You lay down on de bed an' preten' you dead." So B'Rabby cried out, "Poor B'Rabby got no mother!" Dey ask him, "Where was his mother?" He said, "Don't ask me nothin', but go in de room and see for yerself!" When de B'Rabbies got in de room to see de mother, he stood behin' de door with a club in his hand an' after de room got full, he jump with his club and lock the door. He began to knock down B'Rabbies. Some he kill, some he cripple, an' de balance got clear. Him an' he mother got plenty of meat to eat.

After dat, by him servin' such a dirty trick dey despised him, would not have nothing no more to do with him, an' B'Rabby said, "I didn' ker about it. We had meat to eat and water to drink."

Chapter Eight

CAVALIER AND PURITAN

" . . . to trust also to the doubtfulness of battle is but a fearsome and uncertain adventure, seeing wherein fortune is as likely to prevail as virtue . . ."

—Sir Francis Drake

THE shots fired at Fort Sumter did more than merely open the war between the states in America. They likewise delayed the acceptance of the principle of self-determination in world politics. Beyond that they led directly to a revision of sea tactics in blockading. Quite incidentally to this last accomplishment those volleys rescued the Bahamas from the doldrums that had followed the abolition of the slave trade. Again they opened up a new era in shipbuilding and in time effected the transformation of the man o' war into the steel-clad battleship.

In the islands the effects of America's Civil War were great. One of the first results was to give sound sea and fighting practice to a group of British naval officers, either retired or on leave from the fleet; practice which was later profoundly to affect the precepts taught in naval schools.

To Nassau itself the war brought a revival of the

old passion for the sea and its ways, the rise of family fortunes, the replenishing of an almost depleted public treasury. To the old South—last refuge of the Cavalier overseas and home of the Jacobite Loyalists—it brought disaster by battle after an underdog struggle that is still the admiration of all professional soldiers.

The Stars and Bars hang furled in the assembly halls of schools and in museums in the South. Yet their page in the story of the English-speaking peoples has lent lustre to the vanquished as well as to the victor. As to the war's inception and its economic causes contention still rages; in the literature of the times these matters seem not so prominent. The appeal to the Divinity is more in evidence than the appeal to reason. Going further, it is not to be assumed that virtue alone triumphed when Lee tendered his sword to Grant. It is quite certain that for once the Napoleonic maxim was correct: "The God of Battles fights on the side of the heaviest battalions."

According to an imitative chorus of historians the Bahamas were "rescued from a pigeonhole in the Colonial Office" by the Civil War blockade of southern ports. The islands of New Providence and of "the men of the North," of which I have already written, were to acquire a great part of that wealth, state, municipal and personal, which was thrown into the maelstrom of war in the South's effort to create a new nation.

That the Confederacy lost may or may not have affected the political relationships of two peoples, Bahamian and southern American, who are singularly alike in many aspects of character and environment. The sympathies of the white British subjects in the Bahamas were with the Confederates and the fact made it easy for the colonists to enter into a profitable business—blockade running. As the business developed both races, white and coloured, were practically a unit, in disregarding any moral principles involved in the struggle and in considering profits as the only criterion of their actions. Whether employed as agents or stevedores, the men of each race showed a whole-hearted desire to get rich quickly. There was little time for moralizing; docks were laden with cargoes, ships were clearing to meet the unregulatable factors of tide and light, and Nassau was filled with easy money. Furthermore, the treatment of vessels that the Yankees boarded at sea did not encourage any leaning towards the cause of the North. The dusty pigeonhole in London grew to a diplomatic office dossier of mammoth proportions as the years rolled on.

In the Bahamas the erstwhile seemingly contented civil servant sniffed gunpowder in 1860 or 1861 and hied himself to the quayside, bent on following the ways of his forefathers on the seas. The urge was gain, but the call was the clear call of the wind in the rigging and the pipe of boatswains' whistles.

There was, it is said, a new swagger in the walk of the young bloods about town who "ran the blockade"; they were salted men, they had dared and done, and there were golden sovereigns in their belts. They had met the fair charmers of Wilmington and Charleston. These men were perhaps unconscious of the fact that their forbears had been likewise important on the pierheads of Bristol when they had singed the beard of the King of Spain.

It was a great day indeed; a day of seagoing glory for men under aliases who were properly captains of British gunboats and so had the quarterdeck manner, for old quartermasters who had a Royal Navy forelock to pull, and for great gentlemen from Liverpool and Bristol who dealt in "barrels of money" and seemed to be able to command the services of those demigods of other days, Governors and Chief Justices.

These men treated a "lad of parts" well. They knew a good man when they saw one—so a snap of the fingers for the guardships off the American coast. Pooh! The Conch on the look-out knew how to slip by them—"Them damn Yankees couldn't beat a feller who knew the cays and the north-west channel like he knew Bay Street!"

"Great days," as we remark, and a splendid time of training for a naval reserve in embryo. The young man of the period figuratively cut his teeth on tar rope and used cinder ash from the funnels of the *Banshee* and her confrères as a dentifrice.

The Federal Navy had a long shore to patrol, extending from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande south of Texas—some three thousand miles. About a dozen ports of importance had to be blockaded if the Government's decree was to mean anything. The task was attempted by their nucleus fleet of 150 vessels, mostly unserviceable, and with only forty of that number in commission and manned with trained or partly-trained crews.

The first eighteen months of the war did little to interfere with the running of contraband, but by 1865 the newly created American fleet of 700 ships of every description was afloat. Of this flotilla 150 devoted themselves to the waters between the Bahamas, Charleston and Wilmington. Ere this Nassau had settled down from an adventure to an organized business. Newcomers headed it so far as imports from England were concerned. The most notable of these was a Mr. Thomas E. Taylor, who wrote a clever informative book of his exploits. As local magnates of exchange and charter there were Sawyer, Adderley, Menendez, Sweeting, Bethel, Johnson, Meadows, Weech, Harris and Bain.

Construction contracts multiplied, Bay Street gained a handsome set of buildings, structures now utilized as dwellings and offices. New and handsome residences appeared on the ridge behind the town; family connections with England that had lain neglected through the lean years were now renewed.

So a new group of "first families" emerged. The old city was surging with invigorated life; the Royal Victoria Hotel was at once the rendezvous of the southern agent and of the northern intelligence officer, as well as the fashionable dining place of the élite of the contrabandista. Freight outbound to Wilmington and Charleston was £80 to £100 a ton, the sailing distance to the first only 650 miles and to the second, even less, 560 miles.

During the period from 1861 to 1866 five Governors succeeded one another in office and their comments on the new prosperity seem today mere reflections of quaint political and personal reactions to the war.

The women of the colony rose to the occasion. On the official side there must be mentioned the Hon. Mrs. Charles Bayley, who was a leader in social activities as well as a Governor's spouse. She gave hearty and unqualified recognition to the incognito sailormen who came from Portsmouth or from the ships of the white ensign. Mrs. Murray Aynsley and Mrs. Hobart, we learn, assisted in cheering up the leaders of the blockade runners between spells of active service at sea.

Mrs. Hobart's husband later helped lead the fighting Turkish Navy at sea in the Cretan and Russo-Turkish wars; Frank Vizetelly, an associate, was afterwards killed in the Sudan. Captain Hugh Burgoyne, V.C., went down years after on his ship, H.M.S. *Captain*,

in the Bay of Biscay. Captain Hewett, V.C., became Admiral of the Channel fleet; Captain Murray Aynsley died an Admiral. A great company this to lead the descendants of men who had followed the fleet captains of more desperate centuries.

What of their ships? These slim greyhounds were lightly built and sheltered as to foredecks. Possessing only shallow draught and propelled by paddle wheels they reached the breath-taking speed of ten knots per hour and sometimes twelve when the wind was behind them and a square sail was set. An English company operated the *Banshee*, *Tubal Cain*, *Antigone*, *Don*, *Venus*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Wild Dayrell*, *Will o' the Wisp*, *Stormy Petrel*, *Wild Rover*, *Night Hawk*—and a host of others.

Some four hundred vessels cleared for the Confederate States during the last few years of the trade. Everybody who was anybody had an oar in the boat, so to speak, and tremendous fortunes were made. The blockade runners ran without lights, bluffed about fleet signals, worked into the Cape Fear River by sounding. When chance missserved them they sank—or suffered an occasional shell through their superstructure and hull. Officers and men of these vessels were idols to the populations at both ends of the run; the feasting on shore made up for scanty meals at sea; the anxious, dangerous hours had their recompense in cash and entertainment. And their characters suffered no stain because of the tasks

they accomplished. This game attracted young men because of its very challenge to nerve and resourcefulness; the Conch surpassed himself in it. He grew so famous that the wandering attention of the Colonial Office in London was drawn back to this archipelago of forgotten islands conveniently situated near the American coast—a group which had some fatal faculty for being in every mix-up that called for brains and sea mettle.

The trouble about “this outlandish Bahamas fella” was that he prospered. The more he prospered the more independent and more assertive he became about his autonomous position, the less he cared for guidance offered paternally from “home.” The swagger of the young ’un who had defied Uncle Sam’s new fleet grew in after years into a solid disdain of guidance from overseas for the local legislator. So the sorrows of Colonial Office officials multiplied as they contemplated the enlarged Treasury expenditures and demands for the provision of ambitious public works. Worry was the lot of the officials, but not of the natives. They knew the “island story”; when the money was spent something else would turn up. It had happened before—the Isles of June were favourites of the gods!

Certainly the majority of these men led a charmed life during the war. The Federal Navy lacked little in organization save that habit of co-ordinated discipline which can be developed only in permanent

forces working together over a long period. It possessed, as is usual to such hastily created units, the advantages and the disadvantages inherent in individualism. It was this last factor which provided opportunities for the daring men who passed through the ships' lines. Shipmasters of the patrol, commanding auxiliary vessels and temporarily under command of Admirals of the regular Navy, rarely could resist the temptation to attempt captures by deserting their stations. Were there not large rewards for bringing in blockade runners? This practice left gaps in the outpost line, so to speak. Here was a serious flaw in Uncle Sam's armour, though it was partly made up for by the great numbers of the guard vessels. A blockade runner dared not arm his vessel, else he became a pirate under international law. The closer one came to the coast the closer together were the guardships—particularly about the harbours. The last few miles into port were of the highest hazard. Therefore, the runners sailed in "whole hog or nothing," relying on speed and skill to make their ports. Some Bahamians got a taste of northern prisons, but this was no deterrent to others of the sea-born men of the islands. Answering to the huntsman's Tally-ho!, they followed the Four Horsemen in high glee and with mettlesome spirit—taking the risks, as had their fathers before them, with their thoughts centred solely on the prize in view.

An old negro, now living on one of the cays, was

introduced to me as a survivor of the "runners." He had, he said, been a boatswain on one of the "paddle packets" running out of Nassau. His story was, as might be expected of an old man in the eighties, rather disconnected; it was apparent that he had on one run been on a side-wheel steamer which had an encounter off the North Breaker shoal and that before it reached the protection of Fort Fisher at Wilmington, his ship had lost a mast by shell fire and had its coal bunker pierced by a shot. He had made £40 that trip. He showed me some mementoes taken from a Confederate vessel, the *Beauregard*, which he said had been wrecked on the cay nearby. I was particularly interested in the fact that this old negro was a very religious man and reminded me: "De folkses today don't think of God enough." He had an Old Testament that had been given to him in Charleston by a clergyman during one of his stops there and he confessed it had "converted" him. His captain also was a godly man, he said—and was accustomed to have prayers on Sundays. That practice was, in all likelihood, an outcome of this master's training as an officer in the British Navy. Under all conditions he would hold true to form and habit—even in the peril and anxiety of his unlawful trade.

Very few are alive today who recall anything of the actual sea-going of the ships from Nassau or Abaco. It is quite in order, though, to mark the fact that the men and women of great age who recall

anything of this are devoted churchgoers and Sabatarians of a rigid kind. The Puritan strain has kept its high moral impetus even if sometimes its deeds have been on the border line of advantageous self-interest. The livelihood was divorced in principle from the life eternal, a very practical division.

Taylor, who discusses the problem of the blockade runner at length in his book, asserts that the northern fleet operated on a wrong principle in keeping close to shore and that if the runner could establish his position and arrive during the night ten miles off port he had a good chance of getting through before daylight. He says also that the element of risk was exaggerated and that the right combination of pluck and caution greatly limited it. He wrote, too, an interesting prediction of armed merchantmen going about their business without fear in a future war—but one factor not within his ken was to arise to make his plan untenable. That was the submarine. That single invention altered all sea practices, caused the augmenting of stationary defense measures and, in conjunction with mine fields, wholly changed blockade-running prospects. A mine field off Wilmington or Charleston would have closed these ports much more effectively than the hundred of patrol vessels. The problem now has been changed from one of sea vigilance to one of underwater reconnaissance and the supply of needed auxiliary forces to clear the sea path. In addition, a covering squadron of mixed speed

and calibre of guns must be provided to insure protection. The Great War showed how desperate may become the problem of feeding a nation even when such measures of coastal defense are provided. The desperate courage of a handful of capable submarine commanders almost checkmated the finest battle squadrons afloat and greatly restricted their range of action when they were left without protective screens of fast destroyers and sweepers.

Letters and reminiscences of the Civil War times make constant mention of the defender of Fort Fisher, the Confederate Colonel Lamb. He had friends galore, admirers innumerable in the colony. His name seems to have been a by-word for gentleness and gallantry and his portrait was at one time one of the treasured things in many homes.

One at least of these framed mementoes pictures him as the epitome of the Cavalier, his hair worn long and curled to his neck, his face finely cut, grave and patrician, and his eyes full and expressive. Had he worn the feathered hat and ruffles of Prince Rupert's Cavalry he would have seemed a beau sabreur of that day. Doubtless, too, his habits and his attributes were such as would have made him one of them. He had a chivalrous way of meeting victory as well as defeat and his name conjures up an old régime that has passed. It is perhaps a pity, too.

The power of the greatest reserve in men and guns can enforce a peace, but as has been painfully re-

vealed in the last two decades, a mere political operation cannot create a healthy economic body.

The failure of Bragg in the defence of Richmond and the capture of Fort Fisher closed the day of great adventure and stupendous trading profits for the Bahamas. The free flow of money was over and done with and the losers henceforth would be those who held Confederate bonds. These included leaders among the best investing houses of the British peoples. Gladstone, inheritor of wealth won by slaves, was to become the negotiator of settlements that appeased the triumphant North. The arbitration awards of the time cost the young Canadian Dominion great amounts for years for mobilization on her frontiers of the standing militia. A precaution that proved not idle. It also cost life in repelling two invasions of Fenians, principally discharged Union officers and men, before the invaders awoke to the fact that "shirt-sleeves" tactics brought unpleasant reactions abroad. The moralists who had cheered for Lincoln and the Union in British circles received a rude shock when in subsequent years they met in diplomacy the advocates of abolition.

From a report made by Governor Rawson, C.B., in 1864 I have culled the following cryptic facts anent the blockade-running business:

1. The first vessel that arrived from a blockaded port was the *Prince of Wales*, a small

Confederate schooner of 74 tons, manned by five men, which arrived from Charleston with 140 bales of cotton on the 5th December, 1861.

2. The first vessel which left Nassau to run the blockade, clearing for St. Johns, N. B., was the Confederate steamer *Theodora*; it sailed on the 16th December, 1861 with a cargo, having arrived on the 10th December with 75 bales of cotton.

3. The last vessel to arrive was the steamer *Imogene*, which brought a cargo of cotton from Galveston on 10th May, 1865. The last which cleared to run the blockade direct from Nassau was the steamer *Little Hattie*, which left on the 25th February, 1865.

4. Fort Fisher fell on the 17th January, 1865; the news reached Nassau on the 24th of that month. Charleston was evacuated on the 10th February following. The news arrived at Nassau on the 18th February.

5. After the end of February a few steamers left for Havana with the view of trying for an opening on the coast of Texas; only two returned to Nassau with cargoes.

6. The first British vessels that succeeded in the trade were schooners that came out from Charleston in March, 1862. The steamer *Gladiator* left Nassau on the 27th December, 1861, and ran into Charleston on 2nd January, 1862, but did not return to Nassau.

7. During the years 1862-63 a considerable trade was carried on in sailing vessels chiefly schooners and sloops. Even two open boats, one of two tons, ran the blockade from the coast

of Florida in 1862. But after the month of May, 1863 the trade was carried on almost exclusively by steamers, and became confined to the ports of Charleston and Wilmington. During these years 72 vessels left for the American coast laden with salt, and 23 vessels arrived with turpentine. The rest with 14 exceptions, were laden with cotton, and in 29 cases with cotton and other produce.

13. The following is the number of times which successful steamers entered with cargoes from the coast. The majority of these had succeeded in passing the blockading fleet twice on each voyage.

No. of Voyages	No. of Steamers
1	51
2	23
3	6
4	5
5	2
6	4
7	2
8	3
9	3
10	2
18	1

14. The latter fortunate vessel was the *Syren*, which left for Charleston on her 19th voyage upon the 13th February, 1865, ignorant of the capture of that place, and so fell into the hands of the Federals.

15. The steamers at first employed were such as happened to be in the southern ports, or

were purchased at random in England and sent out for the trade. Afterwards vessels specially adapted to the business of a size suited to the port of Charleston, were built. The first of these, the *Banshee*, of 216 tons burthen, was launched at Liverpool in November, 1862; was the first steel vessel to cross the Atlantic. Her plates were only one-eighth of an inch thick. She made her first three voyages to and from Wilmington, with full cargoes each way, in the short space of six weeks and was captured on her fourth voyage.

At a later period vessels of a larger class were built and sent out, some of them 260 feet long by 32 in width, and drawing only seven feet when loaded. The *Coquet* and the *Vulture* were of this type. Their tonnages were 390 and 335 tons, respectively. Some of these vessels made the voyage between Wilmington and Nassau (about 600 miles) in 44 hours. Shortly before the close of the war, another class of ships of still greater capacity and speed was sent out from England, but only one or two of these found employment. One of them had twin screws.

A first-class steamer would run from Charleston or Wilmington to Nassau in about 48 hours. She would be discharged in 24 hours, the labourers working day and night; three days for unloading and reloading was considered dispatch. The excitement, extravagance and waste which prevailed under such circumstances may be easily imagined.

This report on the colony was a thorough one; it covers every island then inhabited in the Bahamas. Governor Rawson must have been a painstaking man gifted with the art of terse literary description, so crisp and authoritative are his words.

The student of British colonial history should not miss reading it. It can be seen, but not removed, in the reference section of the old library (once a jail) behind the Law Courts on the Public Square of Nassau.

The years that followed the Civil War were stagnant ones. A disastrous hurricane in '66 was looked upon by many as a visitation of the wrath of God. Tidal waves swept over Hog Island and laid Nassau low. The public money which had been lying idle was spent on restoring the city; many were reduced to penury. Worse was to follow: crop failures, plagues of insects and yellow fever. The latter was a result of overcrowding and poor attention to sanitation during the days of war. Sisal came into the economic plans for reconstruction but failed to hold a place in the world markets. The building of the Panama Canal gave employment abroad to thousands of labourers. The records of the years speak of emigration and departures of whole families, even clans.

Key West became a second Bahamas, the families left at home seemed to be sunk in a morass of helplessness. Business profits were few and a policy of retrenchment won legislative favour. Sponging came

into prominence for a while and provided employment for the natural talents of the natives. The struggle seems to have been to keep intact some semblance of the fortunes that had been so easily made in blockade-running times.

Exploitation proved to be limited to the resources of the colony, and these were limited. The War Office withdrew the garrison, the Dingley Tariff shut off the United States market for fruit, the Cuban Insurrection gave just a few a taste of the thrills of the old blockading days and of easy money. The Boer War was too far away to mean anything. Great warehouses that had held hundreds of thousands of bales of cotton grew cobwebby, life languished; the serious occupied themselves with politics, the simple with religion. Others who had been blessed with good fortune had still boats to play with.

It might be assumed from all this that these islands were to be laid away in the mausoleum of history, like a distinguished effigy, ranged about by tapestried scrolls recalling deeds of the past. Historians might be thrilled by it as by the sight of Thebes or the Pyramids; that it had come to its end as a living thing. The keels of the Conchs' ships, so it seemed, would never again put to sea to challenge alien flags. Only a benediction was needed to close the story of the Bahamas' activity. At least that was the thought of many.

Yet resurrection was to come. The spirit of reform

was resurgent in the United States. It ruled legislatures, then the Congress. It banned cigarettes in at least one state; it disapproved of lipstick. The stars in their courses were setting toward the Bahamas again. Few there were who foresaw change—and so were prepared. A little man with spectacles, a Puritan from the West, was biding his time, perfecting his organization for political victory. Andrew Volstead was looming up; the day was to come when he, as leader of the war on the Demon Rum, would all-unknowingly give a signal that would awaken old sea dogs from a long sleep. And unleash them.

In the sixties it was the Cavalier in the South who gave the colony its prosperity and there is historical irony in the fact that it was the Puritan who in 1919 sounded the tocsin that called Bahamians to new enterprises. Once again they were to relive upon the sea the rôle of adventure that their forefathers had so often filled.

Chapter Nine

THE LAST PHASE!

*"Take my drum to England and hang it by the shore
An' beat it when your powder's runnin' low
. . . and I'll quit the port of Heaven, and we'll
drum them up, drum them up the channel, as
we drummed 'em long ago!"*

MARY was Queen of Scots in 1561, Gertrude was "Queen of Scotch" in Nassau in 1920! Both these women had romantic careers, both could inspire deeds of "derring-do" in reckless men. Both came by small ships to their kingdoms and the reign of each was short. One wore a crown and the other an orange turban that to this day is remembered in Nassau. In character they differed greatly; the clinging Mary was the opposite of Gertrude, whose imperious will and temper more nearly resembled that of Queen Bess of England.

Elizabeth stamped a royal foot on the carpets of Hampton Court; the other, with high-heeled scarlet shoes, trod the decks of rum-runners or fox-trotted at such Bacchanals as the Bootleggers' Ball in Nassau. Neither could be daunted; the two-gunned tough of the Bowery was tamed by Gertrude, swashbucklers trembled when in the Virgin Queen's presence.

The metaphorical "Drake's Drum" which hangs on the shores of New Providence had been silent since blockading days; a pious little man called Volstead was to sound it. Onto the scene of past exploits of buccaneers, privateersmen and blockade runners was to flock a new race of Vikings.

If Rudyard Kipling may be misquoted, their migrations resembled that of those who sailed for Table Bay and the Boer War in 1900—

"Duke's son, cook's son, son of a belted earl,
Twenty thousand gin and scotch on the way to
Tampa Bay!"

The story of the Last Phase opens with a lady's name, a right and tight compliment to one who was known as the "Queen of the Bootleggers." Headquarters for the men of this clan was maintained in the old Lucerne Hotel where Tom Lavelle, a lean and Puritan Irishman kept reasonable peace in his bar. In spite of pistols in many hip pockets, he prevented any "gunplays" within the precincts of his hostelry. The Lucerne was the rendezvous for English officialdom and the Chief Justice, Sir Daniel Tudor, had his quarters there. He lived an exciting life amid the varied collection of men from the ends of the earth who came in to buy liquor or to celebrate the latest trips. The parties there would sometimes be given by "Big Mac," again by "Tampa." Then the gardens

on Nassau's South Side would hear the bing-bang of corks till timid souls in the vicinity would mistake champagne decanting for pistols popping.

Wandering in and out among the roisterers would be "the Chief," a square built ex-Mountie with a fatherly way of saying—"Park your guns upstairs till you sail!"

"Yeah, chief—s'all right wid me—I'll get him when we gits on the row!"

"Talk all you like, but don't try to get him while you are here, or I'll run you in!"

"What'd you arrest me wid, chief? One o' them black bozos o' yours!"

"Yes, and if he doesn't work fast enough, I'd come here and take you right out of the middle of this gang myself!"

"I guess you would! Say, chief, de boys tell me you was in the Mounties—that so?"

"Yes! But that hasn't got a damn thing to do with it—you're going to be good while you are here and quit showing guns, understand?"

"Yeah, all right, chief! Say, have a drink?"

"No, thanks; don't forget what I said!"

Thus was law and order—at least so far as abolishing the use of shooting irons was concerned—held on a light but firm rein. These 'leggers were astounded to find themselves under a flag that knew no bribing of police and boasted likewise of a non-amenable judi-

ciary. They respected that flag and its officials—and that without too much demur.

"Big Bill" McCoy, "Tampa," "Ranger," "Joe," "Mike," "Shorty," "Goldie," and "Suggsy," all would be at the Lucerne on occasion, whooping it up and pouring dollar bills in foaming cascades down the throats of their friends. Most golden of all the spend-thrift periods Nassau had known, it cast into the shade all former waves of prosperity. The rum-runners dollar was spread more widely than ever were the pounds of the blockade breakers or the doubloons of "blackbirders."

America's Prohibition revived the waning economic life of the Bahamas. In the words of one commentator on past periods of depression and prosperity—"ye can't lick the Bahamas, the harder they drop the higher they'll bounce!"

"Big Red," dining in the Lucerne one night, saw the Chief Justice leave his table and retire upstairs.

"Boy," he said to the waiter, "take the old gent as left a bottle o' this!"

The request was obeyed and in a few minutes down came the messenger with, "Sir Daniel's compliments and would the gentleman come up and share it with him."

"Gee!" said Red and heaved three hundred pounds of meat and muscle upstairs to the balcony where the bootleg was duly shared. Returning to his confrères, Red was a hero.

"Drinkin' with the Chief Justice was yer—say, boy, howsit feel to be high-hattin' it?"

"Shut up—the old gent's all right, lay off 'im."

It is not to be supposed that in this new adventure the descendants of the blockade runners were left behind by the sea-going outsiders. The vessel masters from Harbour Island were "out front" with schooner and fast motor boats puncturing the Coast Guard Line, criss-crossing the Gulf Stream with their keels, running the stuff to shore. The history of the sixties contains no more remarkable tales of nerve, courage and seamanship.

The result was that reward which the adventurous deserve—good fortune. Stalwarts from Abaco and the Berrys also are on the list of the successful among the bold spirits of these times. The list reads like a roster of old settlers. Adventurers and Loyalists alike had left their impress on their descendants here.

American Consul Lathrop, well known as an author and the respected friend of the Government—though that made him no less the representative of his country—did all that he could to curb the trade. All men knew this, yet they gave him an affection and respect a pussyfooter never could have earned. He could not block the rum-running, the best he could do was to report the growing exports. The famous McCoy, a man who would go into any company with carefree laughter and bonhomie, said: "Lathrop was a man." The Consul, whose business

it was to harry McCoy off the sea, in turn spoke of him as a "Paul Jones without a fleet commission."

Nassau became one of the strangest by-products of Prohibition. Its contrasts grew more and more vivid as the years rolled along. Before the rum-running era there were no restaurants, no electric lighting, no sewers, no macadamized roadways. "If you wanted to eat," said an old-timer to me, "you bought a can of salmon in one place and some hard tack in another and you sat on the pier and ate them." There were the Lucerne and a few "dumps" where men could "doss," but outside of the Royal Victoria and the Lucerne, not a hotel to speak of. Besides, the "Vic" opened only in winter.

At the beginning of the "booze" era Bahamians were half eager, half afraid—were, in one word, bewildered. For a year or more Nassau folk were plainly nonplussed about the rum business. Then they woke up. Deep called unto deep. The sea became the home of men who for forty-five years had been in petty shopkeeping; the windows changed from panes of ordinary glass to plate, automobiles became as plentiful as telephone numbers; mansions grew in the skies. Nassau was "bouncing high" once more.

Sir George Gamblin, that gentle knight who in the heyday of the traffic was agent for the Royal Bank of Canada, told me of having eleven million dollars in the vaults one Saturday and of a telegram that came that day from Cuba to the effect that a band of "hi-

jackers" had left there intent on raiding the bank. Quickly a barricade was erected around the building; a platoon of police armed with rifles, bayonets and ball ammunition stood guard over the bank for a week. The bandits were scared off.

These Canadian banks in the British West Indies made millions out of the liquor trade. At home in Canada they carried distillers' accounts; naturally they represented these clients in the islands. So American Prohibition helped to establish a chain of Canadian branch banks all the way from Montreal to Belize. A result that even the most sanguine of believers in the friendly relationships between Britain's colonies had never dreamed of accomplishing was brought about easily. Liquor was the stimulant.

The structures with which these northern banks have dotted the islands are frequently the most distinguished buildings in the ports they serve. In the days of rum-running their managers carried their jobs in their hands, risking millions on cargoes destined for Rum Row or for shore deliveries that might easily fail of success. Yet these men made money for the banks. Their staffs quit and went into the more golden rum trade, the managers carried on and in one way or another replaced the deserters; and constantly the business grew. The real story of the adventures of credit by these institutions is yet to be written. It would be a revelation of courage in taking risks that even the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street

in her palmiest days of backing outland adventure might have lacked. The real risks were not carried by the pundits in St. James Street, Montreal, they were carried by the local managers. On meagre salaries themselves, they juggled millions. If the ventures failed and the notes went unpaid then they could expect nothing less than instant dismissal—with loss of their bank pensions.

Where a woodworking plant and the Carib Club now stand in Nassau there was then vacant land. An Irishman from Maryland created a Moorish Colonial enclosure and the bootleggers made a sea lane to his docks. "Cash on the barrel" and "Take it or leave it" were the passwords. Where a man from Providence had another set of piers millions changed hands under the same system. "Want liquor? All right, where's the cash? Righto!" It was not the business of the dealer who possessed liquor to inquire whither it was bound; that was the business of the Customs and the buyer. The men who made the greatest fortunes in Nassau never sailed a ship nor sold to any person in the United States a pint of booze. They did not have to go so far; buyers flooded their offices, took the liquor direct to chartered ships and sailed away.

Mostly what these men sold was American-made liquor that had been shipped abroad for storage prior to the beginning of Prohibition. Bought up by shrewd traders this liquor now travelled back to the land of its origin by way of Europe and the islands and

was sold to the thirsty at triple its original prices. Tom Lavelle tells of "rolls" of \$50,000 or more being checked over the bar of his hotel to be placed for "safekeeping" in the hotel's ancient iron strongbox. This same safe drew acid comment in later days from a "tough boid" who told me "it could have been opened with a corkscrew."

There were other strange results: neglected churches were renovated with liquor money, charities were refinanced, life in general took on a splendour and a spaciousness that even brought about a real estate boom remindful of Miami's great splurge. Rents on Nassau's all-important Bay Street went up like rockets, coloured workers drew pay of \$6 a day, warehouses were bulging with foodstuffs, taxis replaced horse cabs, public works were undertaken, the colony's treasury soared to dizzy heights, hotels were financed with millions.

Tourists came in waves and floods, everyone who made pretension to any knowledge of wines had champagne served for dinner, stevedores made more in bonuses than in wages, the white population took to gasoline for transit and the dark natives acquired silk socks—ofttimes the first foot-coverings they had known. A Casino opened and the élite of the American winter colony took a whirl at the tables. The rattle of the roulette ball in these spacious precincts was echoed at sea—where machine-guns went rat-a-tat-tat and six-pounders barked. But these things

were disregarded by a trade that could not be stemmed. Electric lights blazed for the first time in Nassau streets, water was introduced to city homes by pipe. For several years Nassau, despite these newly-acquired modernities, had the outward seeming of a frontier town of the old West.

Up and down streets that buccaneers had laid out rolled a new tide of marked men, bootleggers, gangster leaders, kidnappers, cracksmen, while for contrast there rubbed elbows with them public school teachers out for a lark and women tourists who never suspected who their passing neighbours might be. There was no roughness to speak of, and no killings, though guns were out time and again when rival gangs met. The majesty of the British law held trouble in the waterfront saloons down to fist fights and the order was "No guns in Nassau"—meaning they were not to be pulled there.

A gentle old lady who ran a hotel had her own way of handling rowdyism when it seemed to threaten an outbreak. She would quietly descend the stairs and walk straight to the hardest-boiled specimens in sight.

"Now, boys, you must go to bed—I won't have it!"

Chagrined and abashed the groups would melt away. "All right, mother, we don't mean no harm, we'll be quiet now."

So she calmed men who had left Rum Row with

murder in their hearts for one another. That is one of the treasured tales of Nassau—the little old lady who governed men who afterward “shot it out” in their home bailiwicks.

The streets of Nassau were enlivened those days by the activities of Phrynes of every shade and colour. Certain corners that had once been quietly drowsy took on a Dawson City aspect. Bootleggers played poker for \$100 bills on piles of empties, competed at pitch and toss with gold pieces on the wharves, roared lewd choruses as they trekked to their boats for outward runs. Timid folk stayed home o’ nights, preachers threatened all and sundry with the wrath of God, an attempt was made to draw social lines between the “best people” and the newly-rich liquor families. But money ruled. Mammon was king—those who did not pay him reverence were too few to matter. Directly or indirectly everyone prospered, so social distinctions grew nebulous. Officially the colony and the Crown’s men knew nothing of the trade yet for many a ripe old British family with a younger son in the Colonial Service there came repetition of the old Bahamian story of fortunes founded on adventure—perhaps even on outlawry.

As in the days of the Spanish galleons, in the days of Clive in India, in the days of African conquest, west or south, so it was again in the Bahamas. The practices of buccaneering, “blackbirding” and wrecking—trades of the past—had in their times laid the

foundations of baronial distinctions. The change to rum-running as a builder of secure fortunes was not so great.

The officials rather enjoyed the pageant that passed before their eyes, it caught the imaginations of those who possessed a perspective anent suddenly acquired riches. So the Crown's deputies from old Britain played the game handsomely amid a conglomeration of new and ofttimes astounding social standards and of a crass reverence for mere money. They might plead for economy as a government policy, but the pace was too swift for them, they were swept along with the generality. Only those who have known "boom days" in mining towns or have been in real estate can understand the scene or feel its rollicking spirit.

Some of the social events, both public and private, are still recalled with laughter. There was, for instance, the incident of the horsey Englishmen who dined—or wined—their guests under the tables, and then had their mounts led to the open French windows to "drink" champagne that was poured into their buckets.

Also colourful was the Bootleggers' Ball—though officially it was known under some other name—where danced many who have since stepped off from this mundane sphere by way of gang wars in the States. A newspaper clipping of the day recites:

"The like of the Bootleggers' Ball never had been

seen in Nassau, even in Blackbeard's day. Held in the Lucerne Gardens, Sunday, July 31, the affair really started on Saturday afternoon. That made Saturday night quite an evening—as nights go hereabout. But, being a large affair, the ball gained in size and dynamic quality but slowly. It was not until Sunday evening that it really struck its stride.

"It came to a close only when the crews of three 'fishing' schooners—each laden with 2,000 cases of booze where fish were supposed to be—departed for some unmentioned point on the North American coast. It took twelve stout and willing men to hustle or drag those crews off to their ships. What became of those schooners, with such crews aboard, is a mighty mystery. They moved out to the Atlantic—so much is certain—at 3 a.m.

"Saturday night was mild. There were several excellent fights but they were all private affairs and quickly quelled by 'Mac,' 'Bill' McCoy, 'Tampa,' 'Pop' or 'Ranger,' who were the bosses of this party. These gentlemen remained sober, or at least sufficiently sober to retain command. The ladies maintained their calm serenity despite clouds that occasionally darkened the social horizon.

"'Ladies, ladies, wot's eatin' you?' cried 'Tampa' once when a storm impended. 'Tampa's' huge face registered pained surprise that any one of the ladies should so far forget herself as to threaten to knock a rival loose from her 'cutie coops.'

"Please to remember, ladies, where you are!"

"Well," snapped the woman who had essayed to do the knocking, 'where does she get off to get high-brow with me? Her husband's only a little barkeeper—mine's a bootlegger.'"

At this point the reader will perceive that a sense of social gradations was developing in the trade. Its repercussions in the social fabric are reverberating to this day. To continue: ". . . the threatened squabble was sidetracked. 'Tampa' and 'Mac' threw the orchestra out at midnight, the evening having proved, so far, a mild one. In fact the real crowd had not yet gathered; this Saturday night affair was but a preliminary. The boys from Gun Cay and Grand Bahama had not yet reported—were not due until Sunday morning.

"These worthies appeared, however, earlier than was expected. At one o'clock Sunday morning they reported. Promptly they hired Gabriel Thompson's orchestra of four pieces. When these mounted the stage the dance was really on."

The scene at the Lucerne is then described; a list of some of those present is given. But the account lacks an expected touch; there is no long list couched in terms of chiffon and velvet, of cerise and old ivory, and recording the gowns that honoured and brightened the occasion. However, why cavil at such an omission when there is so much else of interest?

"Gabriel and his tense and possibly frightened

musicians hold forth dissonantly. On a stage above the dance floor the drinking and conversation go forward."

At this point someone named "Dickie" is found to be drunk to an unseemly degree and is thrown out—too much liquored at the Bootleggers' Ball! A guard is placed at the door and Tom at the bar is told to serve nothing more to "Dickie." Now comes a tepid listing of the highlights of the occasion—the principal guests:

"The man credited with being an unfrocked clergyman is dancing with the pretty wife of a Baltimore lawyer. A man who is in his shirtsleeves and also in a bad humour is due to go on trial for murder next month in Florida—if the Miami prosecutor can land him on American soil. He is credited with having killed a policeman. 'Tampa' is now intent on acquiring the prettiest young woman in the place."

A note of pathos enters now in the description of a guest who has been covertly watched but who eventually lulls the general suspicion.

"He looks like a policeman and the boys are rather hostile at first. But after a time he rips a hundred dollar bill from a roll and buys champagne. He says he wants to buy a fast schooner and ship a couple of thousand cases to Washington. He introduces himself as a retired railroad man but the boys scent something wrong. At first he is off the Big Four—and

then it's the Pennsylvania. He speaks familiarly of two United States senators, pals of his."

At this point we look over the enclosing wall and what do we see? A group of negroes patting juba . . . doing a bit of African dancing . . . the original "shimi shawabbi." . . . Enough—a new personality appears in the original stage setting. One of the town's mysteries. A tall, rather nice-looking young man who arrived in Nassau some months ago with a modicum of baggage and two special cocktail shakers. He may be seen nightly walking from oasis to oasis mixing drinks . . . he has evolved some marvelous beverages, but concerning himself he maintains a baffling silence . . . the ladies gather round him at the announcement of a new cocktail, and he serves what he calls a "coast-to-coast flip."

To quote Kipling this time:

*"Gentlemen rankers out on the spree,
Damned from here to eternity
God ha' mercy on such as we."*

So far everything might have been an every-night scene in a fairly liberal roadhouse outside of Buffalo. Still there's more:

". . . the former vice president of Costa Rica arrived . . . he looked like it. He acted like it. He arrived all alone. He wore a wide straw sombrero and from each hip pocket protruded the pearl grip of a large revolver."

He spoke of himself, so we learn, with modesty: " 'Me, I drink more rum, marry more women an' kill more husban' dan any man in de world. Me! dats me!' And he called for a 'heem,' so the company sang, 'Hail! hail! the gang's all here.' "

" 'Them Central America babies is like that!' was a friend's judicial comment."

This first-hand news story describes an event in what were to prove the halcyon days of the Last Phase. Those who saw the gold-rush in Northern Ontario saw a "tame tabby" party compared with this. The article recites that the citizens in the vicinity of such on-goings were shocked and stayed away. Quite so!

That boom had both substance and colour—and the substance has stayed in Nassau. The public works and harbour programs have remade the city into a modern port without in the least disturbing its historic charm. There might arise recrimination about the cost were it not for the fact that everywhere in the world such windfalls have brought headaches.

Solid improvements were the New Colonial and the Fort Montagu Beach hotels which were financed and built in those times and which have developed a fine tourist trade. Coincident with their erection Americans began buying estates and building homes on Hog Island and the New Providence "mainland"; today these winter residences total an investment of about five million dollars. Nassau acquired world

fame, yet was not dangerous. It never was "tough" in any real sense; it served only as a temporary refilling station for tough customers between trips—and business at sea was too brisk to permit much loitering ashore.

Of the personalities who sometimes trod the city's streets American gang wars have taken a heavy toll. A large percentage of these men, defiant of opposition of every kind as they were of law, died defending their rackets. They were logical successors to the buccaneers—but will a halo of romance encircle their heads a couple of centuries hence? That is in question. Some of them are remembered for deeds of chivalry afloat, others of them for sea-wolfish cruelties that Blackbeard could not have excelled.

They disappeared by the scores in storms or in quarrels that blazed from Rum Row to the lower Gulf Stream. Of these vanished ones some never had been known by the names that were rightfully theirs; their families, if they care, never will know how these black sheep perished. The records of the Biminis and Gun Cay were writ in water, not in ink. The epitaphs of these men who at least shook hands with Beelzebub are often limited to laconic statements:

"Yes, he was here. Left with a load. Bad storm that week, never seen him since."

The Gulf Stream took a greater toll from the rum-runners than did the Federal agents, busy though

they were; the liquor ports on the out-islands became veritable lairs of missing men. The aviators were among the youngest of these adventurers and deserve a page or two. Up into the blue they would soar—up and over the American coast-line and far away. Perhaps to unsuspected places in the Everglades. Promptly after unloading they would wing back again. "Greatest war training we can get," said one who had won his wings flying over the "Old Contemptibles" in Belgium and then flew with contempt over the defences of the Coast Guard.

In time, however, the liquor business lost something of the glamour that adventure had first gilded it with. It became a thing of routine, of mere shop-keeping, of ordering and delivering. Secret codes had been worked out whereby to circumvent the sharpened American espionage. And, then, time brought a change. Gradually Nassau saw fewer and fewer of both men and boats.

It is now some years since the last speedboat churned away for a port other than that on its manifests. The ruffianly, the elegant and the lawless who so merrily enlivened the city went their ways. The wealth they left has turned into solid things of stone and mortar. One scarcely hears the "bootlegger days" mentioned—except when old cronies gather to chuckle over memories.

The best historian of the Last Phase—will it actually be the last?—is Tom, reputable, and always

the hotel man. He finds a new ease in ruling a new domain, the Charlotte. As he mixes a coast-to-coast flip, one hears "Boys, those days are done, we've got to go to work now!"

Quite so! The hectic days are dead and gone, the Bahamas are themselves again. . . . Yet—when one considers that this is the sixth time that "Taps" has been blown over a period of super-exhilaration for the Bahamas, can one avoid turning the eye of the mind into the murk of the future and asking "What next?" After Buccaneering, after Privateering, after Wrecking, after the Loyalists' Slave-empiring, after Blockade-running, after Rum-running—then what? Can it be possible that the Bahamas will not again turn up in the centre of things adventurous and glamorous? Hardly.

Chapter Ten

IN MODERN TIMES

*"There was a veil past which I could not see,
There was a door to which I found no key!"*

THUS the traveller to Nassau might feel if the veil called "Nassau is the Bahamas" had not been drawn aside for him. If there had not been unlocked the door to a kingdom beyond this old-world city. A city which in catering to his exceeding modernity leaves its fascinating past blanketed by a scintillating present.

The gap between the days portrayed in the preceding chapters and the whirl of the propeller's blades as the Pan American Airways liner comes to a landing is so great that it has tended to conceal the ancient glories of the Bahamas behind the steel and stone façades of steel and stone hotels and the pleasant parties of modern homes.

"They err who only England know," says Kipling. And they miss so much who only Nassau know!

Inevitably the wanderer in the Bahamas, whether by land or by sea, will come or leave by this city of quaint streets where inverted cannon make corner posts and electric refrigerators fill tall glasses with

sparkling ice. It is but a step through old streets from the somewhat irksome luxury of self-indulgence to a rendezvous of men of action.

The ultra-modernism of the latest bathing costume is to be seen on Fort Montagu Hotel beach—where Deveaux's men skirmished to capture the old fort. Tea is served to the music of imported orchestras at the New Colonial Hotel—where once the pirates swung in Woodes Rogers' nooses. In the leafy gardens of the Royal Victoria sweethearts promenade—where the gallants of blockading days made merry. The Lucerne, once the rallying place of the Last Phase, is now a pension of respectability; the old Spanish courtyard is given over to the quick-stepping of tourists off the cruise ships. Such are the days. O' nights there are other sounds—those who have ears to hear may catch the "clink of steel," of sword and scabbard. The ghosts of other days linger in memory—in Nassau.

Succeeding waves of prosperity have swept up on the city's hillsides and out east and west of the town the homes of the successful, both Bahamian and foreign. But the streets that run up from the sea still climb past old places round which strange memories cling.

It is a town of sharp contrasts, the old mellowing the new. The ramparted forts alone do not tell all the story, plaques on walls of the cathedrals and in churches, stones in the graveyards and old names

above store windows add their chapters. Laid away in some forgotten spot is Governor Woodes Rogers; under the flagstones below the cathedral chancel steps lies Sir Henry Marr, Kt., and in old St. Matthews where children play in the churchyard there rest gentlemen adventurers, freebooters, Loyalists, sailors and soldiers; makers of the pageant of the Isles of June.

The hibiscus and the poinciana climbing in lavish array on the high walls are now the sole distinction of homes that once housed the famous; gardens that have been the care of four generations stretch inside these limestone enclosures. As you walk the streets the descendants of many whose names have been made familiar by these readings will greet you—and none of them in the fashions their forefathers affected. Such is Nassau; a symposium of the islands' story.

It is so difficult to leave the past in the Bahamas, once you have reached back to it. In a curved doorway, a vaulted arch, even amid the tumbled rocks of the shore, times that have gone by still linger and allure. The ancient story lights up windows in old settings, adds new glimmers to moonlit scenes. Walking or driving, riding or idling, one catches visions of the dramas played upon these stages.

Despite all that has happened here is a city unspoiled. The active life of a winter season flashes past like a swift scene on a cinema screen, polo, golf, tennis, flirtations on bridle paths, sun-tanning

on beaches, dining with the latest "lion" or cocktail-ing with the "best sets." Through its whirl you glimpse the long trail that traces back into the deeps of history—and with the vision comes the thought that the present scene is but a brief performer on this stage that has seen so many dramas.

On the material side Nassau offers everything one can possibly desire that can be purchased for money, a private gambling club, horse racing, yacht racing, the excuse for several daily changes of garment, cosmopolitan hotels and cabarets, also the Jungle Club with its exotic settings. Thousands there are who think they have seen the Bahamas, yet have known only these things—who have never even learned that there are other islands—and other scenes.

Still its representative character has profited Nassau greatly, has brought there an ever-increasing stream of folk of standing in their home lands.

One typical winter's day when the thermometer is about 70 will put before the newcomer's eye a variegated scene that will be Nassau: On a promontory, and herself making a charming picture, a German ex-royal princess is painting a shore-line scene; with an ex-commander of U-boats in devoted attendance. Where pirates dangled wholesale in Woodes Rogers' "neckties," a railroad and banking millionaire from a prairie state is giving a tea. On Paradise Beach a news-reel camera man is catching glimpses of the latest undress in bathing suits. Be-

twixt a palm-fringed point and a rudely projecting cannon that has kept an age-old sentinelship over the harbour, there sail over the blue waters the smart single-stickers of an admiral and an earl, each a seeker for yachting honours. On Prince George's wharf two schoolm'ams are bargaining for basketware. Round about and in between these visitors and the others who are flooding the town in their light flannels and linens, the Conch unobtrusively plies his businesses, whether these smack of ancestral Africa or of modernist America. He is renting boats, loading foodstuffs at quiet docks, toting conch meat and dried fish home for chowder, making baskets, smoking a reflective cigar in a doorway as he watches the panorama of Bay Street sweep by, or else bringing greens to market.

Horse cabs jangle their bells, black traffic police wave commandingly to automobile and wheelbarrow and donkey cart. A boy pedals along in the dusk with a lighted candle in a bag to illumine his cycling way. A strolling descendant of Congo sing-singers intones English doggerel as he caresses his banjo's strings. A Rolls-Royce takes a sharp corner in gingerly fashion; inside are expansive white shirt fronts and jewels, outside there steps aside a woman on whose bandanna-bound head is carried erectly a mess of conch meat and fish. The House of Assembly meets surrounded by the pomp of a Guard of Honour and the glisten of gold braid. A Police Band that, though

black, has acquired some fame, blares airs of another group of white men's islands in a northern sea. A little pickaninny gazes at all this awe-struck. A descendant of men who flashed jungle news by roll of drum goes by with the postal envelope of the white man's slower communications. You wonder at an ancient dockyard that knew the man o' war—and perhaps the galleon. And across the street, for what seems a small sum considering, you may talk with London or New York by radio telephone. You drain your glass in "Dirty Dick's"—or sip a vintage wine in the "Blue Boar"—and white teeth flash in the smile of a dusky waitress. You see old wells in yards—but reservoir water gushes from the tap in your hotel room.

When Bahamians take you for a drive you are apt to think you are being treated to something very like a Chamber of Commerce tour of any city. "Water tower so many thousand gallons; reservoirs so many thousands of gallons of water as pure as Philadelphia's; sewage disposal plant; ice-making plant; electrical department . . . seen the docks yet? Seventy miles of finished roadways, new dock at Clifton, largest liners of all the big transatlantic companies anchoring at the bar . . . air service to Miami daily . . . see the Country Club . . . the race track . . . that's Fort Montagu . . . there is the Jungle . . . let's have a quick one in the new Yacht Club . . . and so on until—some night—you hear the African

drums throbbing over the hill. When that call comes you find your way to Weary Willie's place over there—and from the roof garden look at little Africa in New Providence . . . or you watch a native revue at the "Dunbar."

Here modernity is merely a cloak worn over an interesting old body whose pulse still beats to the tempo of the more leisurely ages or the more stirring times it has known. One who catches that pulse beat may forget for the moment that there are "fifteen hundred first-class hotel rooms" and other creature comforts. But not for long; even after one has revelled in the romantic to one's heart's content it may still seem good to find hot water "ad lib."—as one recent advertisement phrased it.

The finer homes around Nassau divide themselves at once into the old and the new—the very old that reach back into former great times, the very new dating from the latest boom. Behind the ancient ones are gardens with flagged paths and ancient slave quarters now used as kitchens. A few yards hold monkey houses, others deep ferneries in the cellar ruins of old outbuildings. The flowers of the world seem to be planted here for the collectors' pleasure; what could be more pleasing on one's breakfast table than roses in February? Fragrant, out-of-door roses?

Bay Street is the heart—and almost the whole—of Nassau. Leaving it you ascend to the hills through pleasant avenues of palms, or walk between walls of

pink or orange, or green or gray, over which hang the tops of fragrant flowering trees. Gates in these barricades are solidly wooden, are ornamented as well as studded with beautifully wrought ironwork. Oft-times the house will be perched high on some ledge, the gate being cut through the solid rock below. Thus is provided a cool archway on sunny days.

Nassau is a city literally carved from stone. In many of the yards the pits from which the house walls were quarried still exist. Often these are turned into sunken ferneries or gardens. So blotches are transformed into beauties that the eye may enjoy. The climate being almost perfect, the most equable of the sub-tropic zones, there is no extreme heat to wilt or destroy the foliage, and the plants remain green and fresh.

Old wells that were chiselled into the stone by pirate or trader are picturesque garden souvenirs here—especially where they are covered with housings of hardwood and are bowered with creeping roses. The principal use for these wells today is in the watering of gardens—the sanitary drinking supply comes from reserve forest lands via pipes.

Seekers after lovely old architecture will find treasures in the back buildings of many of these estates. Great deep fireplaces and stone ovens still exist in old kitchen buildings that, like the slave quarters, are in the rear. Fireplaces did not exist in the old homes as a rule. It is forty years since a temperature below

fifty-five degrees was recorded—and that was in the most northerly part of northerly Abaco.

In the winter many of the old houses are let to northern visitors who go into raptures over their ancient highboys, chiffoniers and sideboards. A peek into such a mansion oftentimes affords a lovely picture. Feminine beauty from the hothouses of civilization grouped animatedly about a mahogany table. Glowing in the soft light from tapers that are held in candlesticks that were perhaps gifts to some Loyalist bride in the Carolinas. In the place of honour a centrepiece that has come down from Queen Anne's day—treasured and preserved in emigration to the colonies and in flight from their plantations to this new insular life in the Bahamas. Outside the front door of such a house you may find a handbell resting on a stand. This it is that you ring when you wish to announce your presence at the door. That ring is answered by a coloured servant well trained in courtesy yet obviously self-respecting.

The form of government of this ancient outpost of the British Empire is one of the oldest in the western world. The colony is governed by a Council composed of the Governor and an Executive Council under Royal Letters Patent dated September 8, 1909, plus the Legislative Council and a House of Assembly. In this Assembly there are twenty-nine members elected by residents who are British subjects of twelve months' residence and owners of real estate to the

value of £5 or paying a rental of not less than £2.8.0 in New Providence and £1.4.0 on the other islands. The House of Assembly can be visited by permission; the Speaker's ancient mace, which dates back to 1800, will be an object of interest to historians. The Speaker wears a wig and gown of the traditional British type.

The Governor, the Colonial Secretary, the Attorney General, the Receiver General and the Magistrate are appointed from Great Britain, their terms of office are usually about five years. The expenditures of the colony are made through Public Boards which are appointed annually by the Governor. The law in force in the colony is:

1. The Common Law of England.
2. Acts of the Imperial Parliament extended to the colony by local acts.
3. Acts passed by the local House of Assembly.

The "out-islands," meaning those islands which have been described in the previous chapters, are divided into magisterial districts and ordinarily justice is administered by the Commissioners, who act both in an administrative and a judicial capacity. It has been often remarked how secure property is and how lawful on the whole the inhabitants are. Commendation for this is justly due to the British officials who for centuries have been charged with the

duty of seeing that justice was done and that crime was swiftly and adequately punished.

The Criminal Sessions of the Law Courts are preceded by a Cathedral Service and the wigs and gowns worn in court provide an old-world setting that goes back in its traditions to Magna Charta. It is rare that cases of major criminal interest have to be tried. For murder the penalty is death.

Viewing the more modern of fashionable amusements, one is struck by the faintness of the impression they have made upon the people of Nassau. These sports are accepted as a part of the winter life but are looked upon calmly as things which have to do only with outsiders. The Bahamian finds most of his pleasure on and in the sea and the young men and women are born yachtsmen and swimmers. Rugby, tennis, cricket, golf and polo are played throughout the year but it is during the winter that they acquire their northern intensity and international competition gives added zest to team play and matches. Under the ramparts of Fort Charlotte is the new polo field and two miles further west is the Country Club with its fine eighteen-hole golf layout. A special delight here is a spacious bath-house which enables players and gallery alike to have a plunge in the surf after a round of the course. And right next door, so to speak, are the race track and Emerald Beach. Tennis courts abound at the Country Club and in private club grounds.

Of all the club structures the most pleasing is that of the Nassau Yacht Club on the edge of the old Fort Montagu battleground. Here a swim can be enjoyed—or a race. Every week sees a regatta run for local rivals; through the season international events are spotted and some of the best American and English yachts are seen in these races. The Yacht Club is roomy, its terraced grounds run down to the eastern harbour sea front. Standing on one of the loveliest spots on the island, it is extremely popular as an entertainment rendezvous.

The racing season here extends from January to April and there are plenty of island horses to fill events. Then, too, some of the overseas stables fight for the prizes this winter track offers. The same months see an ambitious cabaret show staged at the Jungle Club, admittance to which is by membership. In the Bahamian Club the balls click and the wheels spin. Down in the cavern-like grill-room of the New Colonial Hotel Europe fox-trots with America nightly. A famous native orchestra is heard in the Charlotte. Entirely different is the entertainment up the hill and over it—at Weary Willie's, perhaps better known as Little Africa.

The regular steamship services from New York are by the splendid Munson liners. In winter these are augmented by calls of the Furness Withy line and the cruise ships of all the transatlantic lines. From nearby Miami there is an overnight service by a modern

steamer and from Canada come the white ships of the Canadian National. Most English visitors arrive by the Pacific Mail from Liverpool direct. The Pan American Airways furnish a daily flying service to Miami, the trip taking only a few hours. Today it is only a matter of some twenty hours' flying from frozen Manhattan to tropical Nassau.

In the Bahamas no passports are required and automobiles with foreign plates obtain a six months' license for a small fee. Immigration laws are relaxed for tourists so that servants may enter under bond; customs regulations are smoothed out for winter guests. The Bahamas General Hospital has a staff of Canadian doctors and English and Bahamian nurses. The practice of medicine and dentistry is in the hands of English and American graduates.

As has been remarked, Nassau is an old and sturdy body with a cloak of modernity. Even the Lido touch can be found at Paradise Beach and at the Porcupine Club—membership being required at the latter. Several splendid beaches exist at various clubs and a small public one adjacent to the city is operated west of the New Colonial Hotel at Wavecrest.

Which brings us to one of the great questions, one that is always asked by those who contemplate sojourning on the islands. That query is: "How much does it cost to live in the Bahamas?"

The answer is just as direct: There are charming men and women who are socially accepted every-

where who live on the islands for under \$3,000 a year. Also there are seasonal residents who spend from \$10,000 to \$15,000 apiece on their winter homes. At the other end of the scale the average traveller can live at costs running from \$25 a week up if he stays, for instance, at the modern Rozelda apartments and dines out at a weekly rate. Or he can stop at one of the smaller hotels or pensions and find himself comfortably housed and fed for a similar amount.

Large hotels such as the New Colonial, the Royal Victoria and the Fort Montagu Beach charge \$6 a day and up. Cottages and homes rent at from \$500 to \$3,000 a season. I know of artists and scientists who have lived here at costs not exceeding \$75 a month.

Native servants are paid according to experience. Their wages are matters of pounds and shillings. The Nassau market is a public one and heaps up as ordinary supplies fruits and vegetables, fish, game and poultry that are considered luxuries to the north of the Bahamas. Then, too, for those who prefer American meats and vegetables there are several shops selling imported foodstuffs almost exclusively.

As dollar exchange rises or falls prices may vary slightly, but they have been constant for several years now. Nassau is a place of fixed prices. Shops usually display their wares with tags bearing prices in both pounds and dollars. As the majority of the store offer-

ings are of European or British origin prices average lower than those in the States.

For the visitor who wishes to imbibe the charm of the out islands there is a small hotel at Harbour Island and a boarding house at Rock Sound on Eleuthera Island. Arrangements for transportation and for boat charters can be made at a government information booth on the dock or in the office of the Development Board on Bay Street. Lists of rentable houses can also be obtained there. Mail boats for the out islands leave Nassau about every ten days.

Dorothy Felker, a special writer, has provided the best description I have read of the Nassau scene. She says in part:

"Travellers to Nassau venture to say that their most vivid memory is the colour of the water. It is known as the bluest in the world, but no description can sufficiently emphasize the extent of that superlative, nor put in words the sensuous pleasure experienced by a study of the varied shades of the harbour. The blue of this water once ran purple with the blood of brave adventurers, bold pirates and courageous natives, but today it is a serene setting to a gem of contentment. The blue of the sky reflects the colour of the water, and the blue of the water draws its beauty from the radiance of the sky, and the colour of both is repeated in the life that exists beneath the surface. In the marine sea gardens which may be viewed through glass bottom boats, there are

fish the blue of the heavens, the blue of the sea, and even some forms of plant life carry the Nassau blue in their veins. Sea feathers, sea fans, sea fingers, wave in water currents as leaves of trees flutter in the breeze, and you will have no difficulty imagining you are in an airplane. The hum of the motor of the boat might be the hum of a plane, and you can see the fish dart in and out of mysterious caverns of coral rock as they are frightened by the strange noise and sight above, much as would a person unacquainted with the modern airplane. Sea urchins, impudent looking fish whose black prongs must make them unpopular in their world, are strangely indifferent to the putter of the motor and the queer looking species who gaze down on them. Broad stretches of sea grass resemble prairie grass, and the expanse of white sand from time to time seems to be a most inviting beach. The water is so clear that you almost forget that the medium between you and the view below is water instead of air.

"Some fashion designer should add 'Nassau blue' to his list of colours. We couldn't help noticing that the doors at the Fort Montagu Beach Hotel are the soft blue of the sky, and even the lapels of the mess uniform of His Excellency's aide-de-camp must have been inspired by the colour of the sea around this ancient British possession.

"Apparently some kind of inflation has taken place in Nassau, too. The negro boys who used to dive for

pennies now value their services at a dime and up. The small boats are waiting for cruise ships long before they get into port, and once along side, clamour for business. They do not work as hard for their money as you think. The money sinks through the salt water rather slowly and before it has much more than started on its way down, the practiced diver has caught it between his teeth."

Now the reader has had the veil drawn aside; the real Bahamas have been in part revealed to him—or her. The high romance of these colourful isles is as yet unwritten by any master of fiction—though several writers of that quality now winter regularly in the colony. Some day someone will envisage Colonel Deveaux, well along in years yet waving his sword lustily in his Tory stronghold on the Forrest estate and advancing to combat Yankee privateers who have landed to seize fresh meat and water. Taking this choleric old Loyalist, a famous duellist in his youth, for a central figure, such a writer will conjure out of the tales of derring-do with which the islands' history is filled a chronicle that will stir hearts and pulses.

Gilbert Frankau, writing in his old-time mood, said in his poem, "The Inn of a Thousand Dreams";

*"No man may ride with map for guide and win that
tavern door*

And none may come by rule of thumb . . ."

Each traveller must find for himself in the Bahamas the things that he loves best. For my own part Nassau is much to me; for its people I feel a deep understanding born of much endured and enjoyed together. Yet the strong call of the out-islands holds me in thrall. Their call is one to strike responsive chords in the hearts of all members of a great fraternity—the Companions of the Wanderlust. The call of beauty no artist's brush has yet caught . . . of seas and channels known only to the initiated . . . of tiny islets where the rollers from out the far-flung Atlantic break into spume that is like steam . . . of white sails flecking azure waters . . . of the sun's kiss on a tingling skin . . . of health in the breeze and a tang in the air . . . of a great fish broiling over embers . . . of fruits fresh in the hand for him who cares to pick . . . of a guide whose Fullah ancestors shook the earth with their stamping feet . . . of the song of a hundred birds at dawn. . . .

Isles of June they are, a solace to the tortured who flee life's battlefields . . . heartsease to the weary. And above all a man's land—giving him back stoutness of spirit, bringing out the pioneer worth that lies hidden within us all.

*"No earthly thrill is greater than the feel
Of fighting fish that strike at tempting bait,
No music sweeter than the song of reel
Or humming line that has to wait.*

*As darkness falls the twinkling stars appear
To shine their truly dazzling silver lights
And now begins the strain you'll ever hear
The haunting lullaby of tropic nights."*

—Patrick Hare

Appendix

THE following description of the Bahamas is from Colonial Report No. 1614—Bahamas 1932.

GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, AND HISTORY

Geography.—The Colony of the Bahamas consists of an archipelago of islands, "cays," and rocks lying to the east of Florida and the north of Cuba. They lie along two great banks of unequal size called the Little Bahama Bank and the Great Bahama Bank.

2. In addition to the islands there are numerous cays and rocks, the total area of the Colony being about 4,400 square miles. It is said that there are about 700 islands and over 2,000 rocks. The islands are, as a rule, long, narrow, and low-lying. The ground is very rocky, but the honeycomb rock contains pockets of rich fertile soil.

3. There are no mountains and very few hills, but the islands are by no means lacking in beauty, the

pure white sand of the beaches and the wonderful colouring of the sea making a picture not easily matched. It is probable that the islands were at one time thickly wooded, but little forest remains except at Abaco, Andros, and Grand Bahama. On these three islands there are extensive pine forests, and a certain amount of mahogany and hardwood exists at Andros.

4. *Climate*.—The winter climate of the Bahamas is most delightful. Frost is unknown, the average temperature is about 70° Fahrenheit, the rainfall is slight, and cool breezes prevail. The rainy months are May, June, September, and October, and it is during these months that the greatest heat is experienced, the temperature ranging from 80° to 90° . Although the heat during the summer months is trying, and the mosquitoes and sandflies are troublesome, the islands are never unhealthy.

5. *History*.—At the time when the Bahamas were first discovered, that is to say in 1492, they were inhabited by a race of Indians who were removed to Haiti by the Spaniards to work in the mines. A few stone implements are occasionally found, but, apart from this, there is no trace of the aboriginal inhabitants. The Spaniards made no attempt to colonize the islands, which remained uninhabited until about the year 1629, when they were included in a Royal Grant, from which date they were visited from time to time by settlers from Bermuda. Earlier than that, namely, 1578, they were already regarded as part of

the British domains. In 1647 a Company of "Eleutherian Adventurers" was formed in London for the purpose of colonizing the islands, which were granted by Parliament to the Company despite the earlier Royal Grant. In 1670 yet a third grant was made by Charles II, vesting the islands in six Lords Proprietors.

6. Two years after the grant of the charter the first Governor was appointed by the Lords Proprietors. He and his successors found it extremely difficult to cope with the buccaneers, who at this time were the virtual rulers of the country. In 1673 one Governor was seized and deported to Jamaica; in 1690 another was deposed and imprisoned, and it seems that the only Governors who escaped trouble were those who left the inhabitants to do as they pleased. In addition to internal troubles the Governors appointed by the Lords Proprietors had to deal with invasion. In 1680 the Spaniards destroyed the settlement and carried off the Governor to Cuba. In 1703 a combined force of French and Spaniards destroyed Nassau and carried off the negro slaves, most of the white inhabitants fleeing to Carolina. The new Governor, who arrived in 1704, found New Providence totally uninhabited, and returned to England.

7. Within a few years, however, Nassau was re-established as the headquarters of the pirates in West Indian waters, and so great were the depredations of these pirates that the British Government found

it necessary to send out a Governor to control the Colony and drive the pirates from their stronghold. This Governor, Captain Woodes Rogers, arrived in Nassau in 1718, and in December of that year nine of the leading pirates were executed and the others compelled to give up their nefarious trade. A period of comparative quiet followed, but in 1776 a fleet belonging to the rebellious American Colonies captured the town of Nassau and carried off the Governor, but after a few days the place was evacuated. Five years later a Spanish force took possession of Nassau and left a garrison, but in 1783 the Spaniards were driven out by a British expedition.

8. The subsequent history of the Bahamas is comparatively uneventful. The abolition of slavery in 1838 caused an economic and social change; the outbreak of Civil War in the United States led to a period of considerable prosperity in the Colony which, between the years 1861 and 1865, became a depot for vessels running the "blockade" imposed against the Confederate States.

9. The present Constitution of the Bahamas is similar to those of the North American Colonies prior to the War of Independence. The Government is modelled upon that of England in the early days, the Governor representing the Sovereign, and the nominated Legislative Council and the elected House of Assembly representing respectively the Houses of Lords and Commons.

10. "The Eleutherian Adventurers" who came to the Bahamas from Bermuda after the Parliamentary grant of 1647 brought with them a conception of representative Government already established in Bermuda, and the affairs of the infant Settlement were managed by a Governor, a Council, and an elected Senate. The charter of 1670 to the Lords Proprietors provided for an elected House of Assembly, and the Constitution, much as it exists today, was finally settled in 1729, when the Crown assumed direct control of the Colony. The Bahamas enjoy representative, though not responsible, Government. The Executive Government is in the hands of a Governor, appointed by the Crown, who has the power of veto, and is advised by an Executive Council. Various executive powers and the right to enact certain subsidiary legislation are vested by law in the Governor in Council.

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



124 411

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY